12-2016

The Catholic Church, Catalyst For Change: Taking the Black Community of Rock Hill, SC From the Twentieth to the Twenty-First Century, 1946-2016

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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, CATALYST FOR CHANGE:
TAKING THE BLACK COMMUNITY OF ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA
FROM THE TWENTIETH TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:
1946-2016

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty
Of the
College of
Arts and Sciences
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Of Master of
Arts
In
History
Winthrop University

By
Sandra J. Ludwa

December, 2016
Abstract

The Roman Catholic Oratorians came to Rock Hill, South Carolina in 1935 with the mission to minister to the poor, underprivileged, and disadvantaged of all races and creeds, and to spread the good news of Catholicism. During the past eighty-one years, the Catholic Church has had a tremendous effect on where the community stands today. It was, and remains, significant because it improves economic, social, educational, and vocational conditions for the black community in particular. The church is ever changing, growing, and evolving to meet the needs of its congregation and community, and is quite different from the Catholic Church of the twentieth century. This thesis shows the transformational impact of the Catholic Church upon the community, as it converted from a segregated one to an integrated whole, from the post-World War II years to 2016. It is the story of the Roman Catholic Church in Rock Hill, South Carolina, its people, and the Oratorians who are its inspirational religious leaders. The focus is upon St. Mary's Church which was founded as a black Catholic Church in 1946.
Dedication/Acknowledgments

A thesis is not a solitary project. Never did I think of writing about my Church. However, after I started writing a short research paper for Dr. Andrew Doyle on the subject of Catholicism and the black community, and had the opportunity to interview Br. David Boone of the Rock Hill Oratory, the idea became an exciting reality. I lived north of the Mason-Dixon Line for most of my life and never realized the horrific conditions that existed in the South during the twentieth century; this is my own lifetime. It all came back to race, prejudice, poverty, and segregation. Yet, little has been written about the Catholics and their ongoing efforts in this Piedmont area. It is specifically to Br. David, who has been an inspiration to me, that I dedicate my work. Without him, this paper would not have provided the personal insight which is imperative in a study of this nature. The Oratorians, and specifically Judy Gritzmacher, who is the Assistant Director of the Oratory Center for Spirituality, have been most gracious in allowing access to archives and in answering my many questions.

I thank my husband Michael and daughter Nicole for their support in putting up with my mission and Dr. Eddie Lee for his guidance, encouragement, and direction throughout this project. Without the three of them, this would not have been completed. Thank you Professors Peter J. Judge and Donald A. Rakestraw for your advice and counseling. I am grateful to the countless others in this community for their patience in responding to my never-ending inquiries, their interviews, and providing vision to enable my understanding of the Catholic Church in the Rock Hill community.
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Chronology of Significant Events

1934
Fr. Paul Hatch receives permission to start an Oratory and in 1935 leads a dozen seminarians and priests to Rock Hill, South Carolina.

1935
St. Philip of Mercy Diocese Hospital is started and staffed by the Franciscan Sisters of Peoria, Illinois who are invited by the Oratory to manage its operation.

1937
A benefactor provides funding and Faber Hall is built. The Neri Mission Institute for Boys, a boarding school, is opened at the Oratory.

1937
Divine Saviour Hospital is opened in York, South Carolina and is also staffed by the Franciscan sisters.

1940
The Oratorians work to help establish labor unions for textile workers.

1945
Fr. Edward Wahl writes Bishop Emmett Walsh requesting that a church and recreational center be built for the black community.

1946
St. Mary Church is founded. It is built within the black community.

1947
Pontifical status is granted to the Oratorians.

1951
The Crawford Road Credit Union is established to permit growth and development for the black community.

1951
St. Anne's opens a school for kindergarten, first, and second grades.

1954 May 17
The Supreme Court rules in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, in a unanimous agreement that segregation in public schools is unconstitutional. This overturns the 1896 decision in Plessy v. Ferguson on "separate but equal" segregation of races.
1954  August
The Sisters of Christian Doctrine arrive to assist at St. Mary's.

1954  September 7
St. Anne's admits seven black children and paves the way for integration.

1955
St. Mary's opens a kindergarten.

1957  July 13
Addelene Austin exits a bus in Rock Hill rather than stand and a bus Boycott begins. Star Transportation, the city bus system, goes out of business on December 13, 1957.

1958
St. Philip Hospital closes due to lack of funds.

1960
Br. David Boone and the Rev. Cecil A. Ivory conduct a voter registration drive in coordination with the American Friends Service Committee.

1961  January 31
The Friendship Nine refuse to leave the lunch counter at McCrory's and are arrested.

1961  May 9
The Freedom Riders come to Rock Hill.

1961  September 22
Attorney General Robert Kennedy orders desegregation by the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to take effect on November 21, 1961.

1962  October
Pope John XXIII opens the Second Vatican Council.

1964  January 23
The 24th Amendment abolishes the poll tax.

1964  July 2
President Lyndon Johnson signs the 1964 Civil Rights Act which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, creed, or color. It gives the federal government the power to enforce desegregation.

1965
Br. David Boone approaches the Rock Hill Parks and Recreation Committee, and approval is granted allowing black teams to participate in city league games.
1965  December 8
Vatican II concludes. The Catholic Church examines its role in the modern world and calls for renewal through its sixteen documents. The Church empowers the laity to fill roles and become leaders.

1968
Petitions are drawn and accepted by the Rock Hill City Council, and new areas are added to the city, bringing utilities to the black community.

1970
Rock Hill Schools begin desegregation. Emmett Scott School is closed.

1972  January 26
Two hundred black students protesting school policies, walk out of Rock Hill High School.

1986  April
The Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen opens.

2010
St. Mary’s programs are expanded to facilitate a large community outreach program.

2016
St. Mary’s celebrates seventy years in the community.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFSC</td>
<td>American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organization which promotes peace and justice and works to transform social relationships and systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPHR</td>
<td>Committee for the Promotion of Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.O.</td>
<td>Congregation of the Oratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORE</td>
<td>Congress of Racial Equality</td>
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<tr>
<td>CYO</td>
<td>Catholic Youth Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEW</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAACP</td>
<td>National Association for the Advancement of Colored People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCD</td>
<td>Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHCHR</td>
<td>Rock Hill Council on Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCLC</td>
<td>Southern Christian Leadership Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCSRC</td>
<td>South Carolina Southern Regional Council, affiliated with the Rock Hill Council on Human Relations (RHCHR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.J.</td>
<td>Society of Jesus (Jesuits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNCC</td>
<td>Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His spirit, washed in His blood.
This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.

BLESSED ASSURANCE
Text: Fanny Jane Crosby; Tune: Phoebe Palmer Knapp

From the first time I walked into St. Mary's Catholic Church, which was founded as a black Catholic Church in 1946, I knew that this was the parish for me. It continues to be a place I call home. The congregation is warm, loving, compassionate, and provides services and inspiration for the entire community, regardless of race or creed. There is an uplifting spirit present which is manifested in the warmth of its people, the music, the sermon, and the presence of love.

Prior to moving to Rock Hill, South Carolina in 2013, I knew little of life south of the Mason-Dixon Line. The Line is the symbolic reminder of the split between North and South, and prior to the Civil War it separated the free and slave states. One hundred years after the War, in the South two segregated communities still existed, one black and one white. Not only were there racial prejudices, but religious as well. The Catholic Church played a significant role in Rock Hill to transform the community and overcome and break down these prejudices. It is important that this rich history be recorded, so that future generations are aware of the struggles, sacrifices, victories, and impact on thousands of people. Lessons can be learned so that history is not repeated.
This is the story of the Roman Catholic Church in Rock Hill, South Carolina, its people, and the Oratorians who are its religious leaders. It captures the essence and soul of the community, showing the Catholic Church’s transformational impact on the black community regarding quality of life and integration from the post-World War II years to the present (1946-2016). The Catholic Church was and remains significant, because it reaches out, often under demanding circumstances, to improve the economic, social, educational, and vocational conditions in this community.

Since the late nineteenth century, Jim Crow laws dominated the South. It was a caste system with two levels of laws, one for whites and one for blacks. The unusual name, Jim Crow, was derived from an elderly black slave depicted in minstrel shows who danced to the white man’s tunes with movements depicting a crow. As a result of these laws, African Americans were treated as second class citizens and denied opportunities in all aspects of their lives. This included education, jobs, housing, social activities, and transportation. They were given little respect.¹

Protestantism dominated South Carolina, and Catholics were hardly visible. In 1921, St. Anne, the first Catholic Church opened in Rock Hill, and slowly this unfamiliar Catholic religion established itself. The first priests started this mission church and commuted from long distances. The Jesuit priests (S.J.) followed and were a presence for six years until the Congregation of the Oratory (C.O.) established themselves and began

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the long road to improve conditions for all people, but particularly the black community. The Congregation adapted to the needs of the community and in 1946 established a black Catholic parish named St. Mary. Their work began with recreational activities for the young, care of the poor and sick, religious and moral education, and conversions soon expanded. In 1954, St. Anne School admitted its first black students and became the first integrated school in South Carolina. The Oratorians established a credit union which fulfilled the need for financial assistance in the black community. The church then joined with leaders of other faiths to support protests, such as a bus boycott in 1957. These events led to full involvement in the struggle for civil rights.

During the 1960’s and early 1970’s, the Catholic Oratorians were at the forefront of the civil rights movement and completely immersed in the struggles for equal rights for all races. They supported the sit-ins, freedom rides, and integration of public schools and public recreational facilities. They were involved with voter registration, working to obtain basic utilities to neglected areas, and became active in government and organizations that made a difference. By 1964, when congress passed and the country began enforcing the powerful Civil Rights Act, there were dramatic changes. The younger generation no longer found it necessary to travel to the North after high school to earn an education and gain meaningful employment. This, coupled with Vatican II’s pronouncements and call for laity to become more involved as a church in dialogue with the world, empowered Catholic individuals to take a stand and make a difference.²

Programs such as Outreach and the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen took hold, and the community joined together, no longer fearful of their neighbors’ antipathy.

This paper that follows presents a better understanding of the meeting of the southern community of Rock Hill, South Carolina, the Catholic religion, and the individuals comprising the Congregation of the Oratory. The Oratorians’ presence in the community and their perseverance in overcoming obstacles in financial, legal, prejudicial, and political impediments against race and religion, as well as physical threats, have helped to move the black community from the twentieth to the twenty-first century. That story is recorded here for future generations.
Chapter One: The Catholics Meet Rock Hill

Time and Place: City of Rock Hill, South Carolina

This small southern city had its origins in 1852 when the Charlotte and South Carolina railroad crews began building the rail line. They came upon a small rocky hill and baptized the area Rock Hill. The first white settlement had been established in what is now the Ebenezer Road area, but when the residents protested the tracks being built and the noise trains would cause, the tracks were laid to the east, in what was to become the central business district. Since this was prior to emancipation, there were slaves and paid labor initially building the rail, but contractors primarily used all slave labor available, both male and female.³

Alexander Templeton Black and Ann Hutchison White donated land which straddled their property lines to build a depot. Based on the last names of the donors, this became known as "the Black and White line." The name had nothing to do with race.⁴ Ironically, it also became one of the physical dividing lines between races. The main shopping area for both blacks and whites was Main Street in downtown which is now referred to as Old Town.⁵

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Rock Hill, located in the northeastern part of York County, with an elevation of 668 feet above sea level and the highest point of the railroad between Charlotte and Augusta, offered good drainage, pure water and air, and an ideal climate in an abundant agricultural area. However, as in most of the South, the economy was based on the staple crop, cotton.6

The city endured the Civil War and Rock Hill became the center of high Ku Klux Klan (KKK) activity during the Reconstruction Period. The initial cradle of Rock Hill, the Ebenezer area, was the KKK headquarters for the county. The region was so violent, that from 1871 until 1877, federal troops were stationed in the area. By 1880, the Village of Rock Hill with a population of 808, had grown rapidly. It boasted businesses, two schools, a volunteer fire department, a police force of one, and eight saloons. On Saturdays, the quiet town invited lawlessness. Women and children were advised to stay at home when streets were overcome with men spending their wages on alcohol. Murders were common. Conditions became intolerable and the city voted to become “dry,” in 1881. The village rapidly expanded and flourished into the twentieth century. The first cotton mill opened in 1881, followed by many more. There was a mule market, brick factory, machine shops, flour mills, and the Anderson Buggy Company made Rock Hill known. Before Winthrop Normal College (now Winthrop University) existed, two black colleges came into existence: in 1891, the Friendship Normal and Industrial

Institute, and in 1894, Clinton Normal and Industrial College. In 1892 Rock Hill officially became a city.\textsuperscript{7}

In 1904, after the building of the Catawba Dam, there was rapid growth and the city became a mill town, but like the rest of America, experienced ebbs and flows. After World War I, the country experienced the disillusionment of the Roaring Twenties, and drifted into the Great Depression, manifested by the stock market crash in 1929. Despite hard times, Rock Hill was spared some of the misery of this period by the building of new plants and help from the federal government. In 1929, the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Company, known as the Bleachery, established by a New York City group of investors, began operation. It ran at full capacity throughout World War II. Businessmen encouraged northern industries to come to the area and by 1947, the huge Celanese plant opened. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal projects placed money into southern shipyards and military bases, and public works endeavors included a new city hall, hospital, and gym for Rock Hill. The economy improved.\textsuperscript{8}

In 1940, Rock Hill had 15,009 inhabitants, and by 1950 the population grew to 24,502, with 20.5 percent being nonwhite. Overall, the population increased 63.2 percent from 1940 to 1950.\textsuperscript{9} The April 1946 issue of \textit{South Carolina Magazine} stated there were

\textsuperscript{7} Brown, \textit{A City without Cobwebs}, 168, 170, 185, 218-219, 225, 227-228; In 2016, These institutions are: Winthrop University, and Clinton College. Friendship Normal and Industrial became Friendship Junior College and closed in 1981.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 258-260.

\textsuperscript{9} US Census Bureau, "Number of Inhabitants South Carolina," accessed September 12, 2015, http://www.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/246675v2p40eh1.pdf.html. In the 1950 census this is the first year that the federal government had a classification of for all not whites.
twenty-two textile plants, one of the largest paper and finishing plants in the South, and the new Celanese Plant soon to be built. It touted York County as the “Center of Diverse Enterprises.” It advertised Rock Hill as a city that doubled its population during the past twenty-five years and consisted of “satisfied native labor of the type that makes for profitable uninterrupted operation.” It emphasized that at 79.6 percent, it had the largest percentage of white population of any South Carolina city and less than one percent were foreign born. It was the fastest growing city in South Carolina. There was a popular slogan: “Grow with Rock Hill known as South Carolina’s Good town.” Ever since 1912, the phrase that "Rock Hill is a Good Town" was commonly used to describe this city. It was credited to James S. White, Jr., the great-grandson of Ann Hutchinson White who had donated a portion of the land for Rock Hill's railroad depot. White, who truly believed the phrase, wanted to promote Rock Hill as a good place to live and even rode his bicycle, "Old Betsy," all over the United States with a sign that read "Rock Hill is a Good Town." Some of the white population, however, felt this was an understatement and stated Rock Hill was becoming more than a good town but a great city.10

Between 1945 and 1950, World War II veterans of all races returned home and many relocated to cities. As industry boomed, people moved from the country to cities in search of a better standard of living. Some went north, but most often southerners moved

10. William B. White, Jr., *Along the Land's Ford Road, Volume II* (Rock Hill: Historic Rock Hill, 2008), 11; Also reference to the Good Town becoming a great city see Lynn Willoughby, *The "Good Town" Does Well: Rock Hill, S.C., 1852-2002* (Orangeburg: Written in Stone, 2002), 147, 210; Reference to White’s bicycle ride see Anna Douglas, "Great-Grandson of Rock Hill Cyclist to recreate ancestor’s 700 mile trip to New York." *Herald.* March 21, 2014; See *South Carolina Magazine,* "York County Center of Diverse Enterprises,” 6, and subsequent advertisement by Rock Hill Board of Trade, April, 1946 Vol. 9, No. 4 for advertisement and population figures.
first to southern cities before even considering a relocation out of the region.\textsuperscript{11} Rock Hill, situated twenty-five miles south of Charlotte, North Carolina, was indeed the fastest growing city in South Carolina.

Although a thriving place for white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, Rock Hill like virtually every other southern city, had two separate communities, one black and one white. Jim Crow laws enforcing racial segregation reigned. These caste laws were meant to establish order and keep non-whites in their place. Many whites viewed blacks as a threat to their power and wished to perpetuate centuries of black exploitation. Blacks were given the lowest paying and unskilled jobs regardless of education or qualifications, and discrimination grew with each generation. There were new manufacturing plants, but the majority of jobs were in the segregated textile industry where blacks had separate work areas, stairways, and entryways. Moreover, the lunchrooms excluded blacks. The mills allowed minimal opportunity for African Americans who continued to suffer.\textsuperscript{12}

The black area in Rock Hill consisted mainly of the communities of Boyd Hill, Flint Hill, Crawford Road or Carroll Park, the Saluda Street corridor, and East Town. Blacks were restricted from owning elsewhere, and the communities remained contained. Rock Hill completed its \textit{Historic Resources Survey Update}, conducted by Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. They noted in their sections on the development of


neighborhoods, that in the area of Forest Heights for example, in the 1940’s during the building boom, the deeds would "exclude occupants of the African or negro race" unless they were "servants in a household." This was not unusual, since in the South some areas issued covenants that ran up to ninety-nine years specifically stating that property could only be sold to whites. There was no such thing as partially white, and mixed persons were considered black. Interracial marriages, under miscegenation laws, were illegal south of the Mason-Dixon Line until the late 1960’s when the Supreme Court legalized interracial marriage in the United States (Loving vs. Virginia), 1969. However, South Carolina still maintained its bans on interracial marriage. It was not until November 1998 in a public referendum that this was repealed in the state. Attitudes were strong and forced even those who did not embrace prejudice to live by the rules of the community and statute of the laws. Children learned from an early age what was demanded of them. Jim Avery, who played in the St. Mary's Catholic Youth Organization Little League and later was one of the high school protesters against unfair treatment in the early 1970’s, remembers that as a very young child he knew which areas were off limits and "You grew up knowing where you belonged and where you didn't." 


Rock Hill, a typical southern segregated community, had massive poverty in the segregated black areas. In these areas, many did not have indoor water, plumbing, or electricity. Some people still used shared wells for their water and out houses or pit toilets were common. Heating was usually supplied by wood or oil heaters.\textsuperscript{16}

In the shared zones for both black and white, there were two of everything which included, rest rooms, drinking fountains, schools, restaurants, and churches, meaning one for African Americans and one for the whites. The roads were unpaved and black children walked to school while the whites rode buses. Shopping for blacks was limited because many stores were truly segregated and did not provide rest room facilities for the black community. Blacks entered through the rear of stores, were not allowed to try on clothes, and waited until all of the whites were taken care of until they were served. There were separate cemeteries and work spaces and blacks were addressed with derogatory terms. Whites were addressed by sir or mam. If a black person was called by a first name, it was considered an honor. Blacks were expected to know their place in society, which was where the whites perceived they should be, and it was a serious offense if you were considered “uppity.”\textsuperscript{17}

Children did not understand the meaning behind Jim Crow segregation. Both Etta Ziegler and John Ellis grew up in the black community and recalled incidents in their

\textsuperscript{16} Fr. Henry Tevlin, (hereinafter referred to as Tevlin), unpublished account, Spring 1954, St. Mary's Archives.

childhoods. Etta said that as a child in the 1950’s, she saw the signs saying "colored" on the water fountains. She wanted to see what colored water looked like and was disappointed to find that it was no different than that from the fountain marked “white.” Her mother had to explain this distinction to her.¹⁸

John Ellis, a current member of St. Mary's Church, described living conditions in Rock Hill during the post-war era. He stated he was one of six children raised by his mother. They were poor, fortunate enough to at least have a water spigot behind the residence. There were two bathroom stalls in the back yard. At age twelve, John with his brother Jimmy would earn money by walking to the local newspaper office daily, where they would roll approximately 800 newspapers, deliver them, and walk home. Jimmy, at age fifteen was able to drive the school bus and he would drive white children to school. The brothers would accomplish all of this in the early morning before they themselves would walk to school. John felt his family was fortunate because his mother could walk to her job at the Salvation Army and she would often bring home food. Their home became a meeting place for children in the neighborhood who would congregate there after school. Since his family had no transportation, when they could get a ride they would attend the black Baptist Church, usually about twice a month. John states the community, with a spirit of resilience, took care of one another and children whether family or not, all were treated as kin.¹⁹

¹⁸ Etta Coleman Ziegler, interview by author, Rock Hill, November 16, 2015.

¹⁹ John Ellis, interview by author, Rock Hill, November 13, 2015.
After World War II, the city of Rock Hill remained segregated and relatively quiet with few racial protests. Social life for African Americans mainly existed in the various churches or organizations such as the Elks or colored Masons. Schools, although inadequate, provided some relief from boredom, but in the heat of summer vacation, children had little to do and lacked play areas.  

Little changed before the 1960’s when Rock Hill found itself at the forefront of the civil rights movement. Edward Wahl began the process when he was ordained a Catholic Priest and soon established a church to lead the two segregated communities out of their Jim Crow past and into a prosperous future. Rock Hill could now become that one great city and not just the good town. However, it was first necessary for the Catholics to establish and prove themselves, and to gain acceptance and trust in the area, before they could contribute and make a lasting difference in the community.

**The Faith: A Story of Two Catholic Religious Communities**

In the twentieth century there were two significant Catholic religious communities in the Rock Hill, South Carolina region: the Society of Jesus, commonly referred to as the Jesuits (S.J.) and the Congregation of the Oratory (C.O.), known as the Oratorians. The earlier of the two was the Jesuits who served the area from 1929 through 1935 when the Oratorians came to the region. Although the Jesuits had been present since 1565 in

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20. Michael Rukstelis, *bRINGING iT aLL bACK hOME*, Unpublished Manuscript, 3-4, St. Mary Church Archives.
what is now the United States, the Rock Hill region had little exposure to them until the twentieth century.  

The Jesuits have greatly impacted Catholic and world history. They were founded in France by St. Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556) in 1534. Numerous records of Loyola’s life and the foundations of the Jesuits exist and are collected through six recorded sources, including approximately seven thousand letters. Loyola was born in a castle to an affluent family in the Basque (Pyrenees) area of Spain and the youngest of thirteen children and became a knight and soldier. While in battle, he suffered a debilitating injury. The injury was a crushed right leg. So serious was his situation, that he was expected to die and last rites administered to prepare him for salvation. Nevertheless, he survived and during his long painful convalescence, underwent a spiritual conversion and came to the clergy. Loyola placed a strong value on education and believed it was vital to teach the uninformed or ignorant. He believed man’s purpose to be his relationship with God and he saw Christ as the teacher who sought to speak to every human and they to Him.

In 1534 Loyola left Spain and went to Paris and formed the “Society of Jesus,” (S.J.). He believed he could not do his destined work within any existing order, and


founded his own. Loyola ranked his following into three grades of membership in the society. These were the well-educated priests who served as the leaders, the spiritual priests who aided the leadership, and the lay brothers, or non-clergy, who engaged in other work such as construction or cooking. He relied on his military background and believed from his missionary travels that Christianity was forever under siege. Therefore, it was his duty to defend organized society. The Jesuits or Society of Jesus, are often considered soldiers or the Marines of the Catholic religion because of their strong leadership and this hierarchy of membership. They are known for their unwavering missionary spirit, often going to uncharted new territories, which was the case in the Rock Hill, South Carolina area in the twentieth century.23

As members of a religious society, the Jesuits take three vows: poverty, chastity, and obedience. In addition, they pledge obedience to the Pope. They are the only society to take this fourth vow. Like the military, Jesuits must be prepared to accept any mission the Pope requires. A mission can involve travel to another country for any calling to fulfill needs such as conversion, education, reform, or to provide a diplomatic role. Jesuits believe in action, human worth, spiritual idealism, and obedience. The society is not authoritarian, and each has its own character and distinctions. Although often recognized for education in colleges and universities, Jesuits can pursue careers of their choosing, e.g., medicine, science, or the arts.24

23. McManamon, Contents of Loyola’s Autobiography, 86, 119; Raymond A. Schroth, American Jesuits: A History, 261; Fr. John Guiliani, (hereinafter referred to as Guiliani), interview by author, October 19, 2015, refers to Jesuits as Marines and they are like a church within the Church.

24. For a discussion on the vows and their adaptability to the American view see Schroth, American Jesuits: A History, 3-6, 261; The following address both vows and diversity of the S.J.: Hollis, The Jesuits: A History, 16-18; Bangert, The Story of the Society of Jesus, 5-7, 510-511; “About Us,”
The second and most significant religious community is the Oratorians who came to Rock Hill in 1935. The Oratorians continue today to minister to Rock Hill and York County, South Carolina, through the Oratory, which is a place of prayer. The Original Congregation of the Oratory was founded in Rome by the charismatic St. Philip Neri (1515-1595). His impact has grown over the past five hundred years even though only thirty letters survive of the written records. Neri preached love and happiness, not hell and damnation, and through his outpouring of love and dedication to the Holy Spirit, his audience grew. Huge crowds would assemble on Sundays in Rome to orate or speak, play games, act out plays, eat, pray, visit churches, and rejoice.25

Neri’s ministry was social concern. The cast-offs, poor, prostitutes, sickly, and particularly the young whom he observed as idle and just “hanging around” the streets and alleyways, flocked to him. Neri witnessed the filthy hospitals, beggars, overworked factory children, and the lack of social concern among people. He worked to improve lives through prison reform, ministering to the ill, weak, and thousands of pilgrims coming to Rome. He loved animals. Neri empowered the laity, who are members of a religious community but are not ordained, to spread good works. As a result, he was strongly criticized that he was too much like the Protestants who allowed strong laity input. Neri did not believe in formal vows. Some members of his following were

ordained and formed the Congregation of the Oratory, but this was not until Neri was nearly sixty years old. By the time of his death there were seven congregations in Italy. After Neri’s death, many miracles were attributed to him by those who prayed to him or kept relics such as his locks of hair. These alleged miracles ranged from miraculous cures to renewed life.  

It was not until 300 years later that John Henry Newman (1801-1890) founded the first English speaking oratory in Birmingham, Great Britain which opened in 1848. Newman was born in London, converted to Catholicism from the Anglican Church (Church of England) in 1845, came to Rome, and found the Oratory intriguing. He, like Neri, inspired by the Holy Ghost, believed an Orator must be open to understand modern lifestyles and become part of a simple and close family. Through this family, made up of fellow Oratorians, the love that rules would flow in spirit to the entire community. The Oratorians would remain close to the community and cognizant of its ever-changing needs.  

Eighty-nine years later, in 1934, the Rock Hill Oratory became the first oratory foundation in the United States of the Congregation of the Oratory. Today it is a part of the worldwide group of Roman Catholic Oratorians, consisting of priests and brothers in seventy-seven independent self-governing houses. The Rock Hill Oratory continues to be


the largest in the United States. The Oratorians are unique from all other orders as its members are bound together by love and charity, and require no formal vows, promises, or pledges. They are not a religious order, but a community of priests and brothers sharing together. Neri believed that there were plenty of religious orders and no vows or personal property needed to be given up. He held that there should be no set rule on how their communities were run.

Although Oratorian priests are ordained, brothers are not, but instead are given the special designation of cleric. Brothers attend seminaries and are subject to voting acceptance or rejection by the members of the congregation. After their first year of training, they must once again be approved by the C.O. in order to continue the next two years as a novice. The work of the brother is also assigned by the Oratory.

There is a strong emphasis on a communal lifestyle in absence of vows and the communities are deliberately kept small and self-sufficient to ensure close and personal relationships. The Oratorians are a family and live together as a social unit. Living as a

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28. The Rock Hill Oratory, "About Us." Congregation of the Oratory, accessed November 10, 2015, http://www.rockhilloratory.net/about-us/; Paul Turks, The Fire of Joy, 153; Br. David Boone (hereinafter referred to as Boone), interview by author, February 12, 2016, is the main contact from Rock Hill and states there are eight oratories in the United States and all maintain a membership from two to eight men. The oratories are Brooklyn, NY, Pittsburgh, PA, Monterrey, CA (formerly located in AZ), Farr, TX, Cincinnati, OH, Philadelphia, PA, and Brunswick, NJ; Every five years representatives, based on the number of Oratorians in the community, are sent to Rome. Most oratories are under eight in number, wherein two representatives are sent; Friends of the Oratory, “Did you know?” May, 2010 affirms the numbers of U.S. and worldwide congregations and that the Rock Hill Oratorians sent their representatives to Pittsburgh and Pharr to establish these later congregations.


family, they help one another, discuss problems collectively, share, and gather together in the same way lay or secular families do. Equality, strong bonds among members, and personal identities are maintained even though all major decisions are discussed by the entire group. Every three years the Oratorians elect a provost who is not superior in the congregation but has the ability to set and propose agendas. Within the structure, there is a general congregation composed of all of the members with voting rights granted at three, six, or ten years. There is also an elected deputy congregation which maintains additional voting rights on items such as budgets or assignments. Nevertheless, all members are heard on every issue affecting the house. The Oratorians remain dedicated to Neri’s missionary principals of evangelism for souls, simple preaching, and care for the poor. However, each community has its own customs and practices so its members can adapt to changing cultures within the community.  

Oratorians differ from parish diocesan priests who report directly to the bishop. From 1935 until 1947 in Rock Hill they operated under Bishop Walsh of the Diocese of Charleston as a diocesan congregation. They were in “Limbo” until they were granted Pontifical Status and became exempt from the diocese by right of the Holy See, which is the jurisdiction of the Church of Rome. All members interact with the groups’ provost who then answers directly to Rome. In order to become an Oratorian, there is education,


32. Richard C. Madden, Catholics in South Carolina, 279.
a period of trial, acceptance or rejection by the congregation, elevation to a deacon, more education and training, and then ordination as a priest and assignment to a parish or service decided by both the individual and the deputy congregation. This process usually takes from six to eight years. Although unique, the Oratorians continue to work closely with the diocese and there is always a strong collaboration between the Oratorians and the bishop.  

Nuns or sisters, the women religious, also played an important role in Rock Hill. They came from many Catholic religious orders and are bound by poverty, chastity, and obedience. Sisters concentrate on their orders' mission or purpose, and made significant contributions in capacities such as nursing, education, and diocesan duties, and are noted in this paper.

The Church becomes firmly planted in Rock Hill

In 1920, St. Anne's was established in Rock Hill as a small mission church, despite the small number of Catholics. Ann Cassidy Welsh, from Eyota, Minnesota, was the first documented Catholic in the area. She and her husband, Dr. J. E. Welch, a dentist, arrived in 1919. Dr. Welch was not Catholic. The region was largely Protestant and occupied by diverse groups which were largely segregated. Many blacks were one generation removed from the Civil War and slavery, and the Catawba Indians continued to occupy their tribal land. Fr. John Guiliani, Provost of the Oratory through February, 2016, stated that the Catholic Church felt it had missed an opportunity for conversion.

after the Civil War by its lack of presence in the area. Subsequently, in the 1920's there was a strong push to reach out to the Indian and black communities and establish a church. The bishop strongly believed once a church and rectory were built, more persons would attend and convert.  

From 1920 to 1929, St. Anne’s was ministered to by the Diocese of Charleston under Fr. William Tobin and followed by Fr. William Mulvahill. Tobin began posting a mass schedule in the newspaper and several Catholics were found. The priests travelled from Columbia, South Carolina and mass was celebrated twice a month. Logistics mattered, as the commute for the priests was over seventy miles one way to offer masses and administer to their flocks in this mission territory.

A change was made in May 1929 when the Jesuits from New Orleans accepted St. Anne’s and its mission territory. The only Catholic presence when the Oratorians arrived in 1935 was the Jesuits with less than one hundred Catholics at St. Anne’s. There had been little success in terms of Catholic conversions from the various diverse Protestant, Indian, and black communities. The Jesuits were strained because they received little help from the community to maintain a huge mission region.

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The Oratorians Establish Their Mission

In the early 1930’s, Fr. Paul Hatch from Auburn, New York desired to start an Oratory in the United States and wrote to every Catholic Bishop in the country asking for permission to do so. The only response came from Bishop Emmett M. Walsh of Charleston. Bishop Walsh was in a predicament. Although the Jesuits had made little progress in ministering to the populations in the York, Chester, and Lancaster County area, the region at least had three priests tending to this large territory. However, in early 1934, true to their fourth vow of obedience, the Jesuits notified Bishop Walsh they were leaving the mission to attend to a new assignment that they had accepted in the Philippines. The bishop convinced them to stay until he could find priests for this huge area. Consequently, in 1934 when Bishop Walsh was approached by this eager young priest, he saw an opportunity that was the answer to his prayers. In return for his support, the Oratorians would take responsibility for this entire region, as well as helping in five additional South Carolina counties. The Jesuits left in August and Hatch was given the bishop’s blessing to start an Oratory.37 The bishop’s control or jurisdiction was and remains over the entire state of South Carolina which has been one diocese since it was established in 1820. Earlier, it had been part of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, but when the populations and cities grew, the territories were split and new dioceses arose in order to facilitate larger populations. For example, Charleston gave up territories eventually

37. Madden, Catholics in South Carolina, 244; Guiliani interview.
leading to the establishment of the Dioceses of Savannah, Atlanta, Raleigh and Charlotte.  

Hatch was an impressive individual. He was well educated and spoke Latin, French, Spanish, German, and a little Italian. He was a charming and charismatic, “a man of compelling personality, a born preacher but no administrator.” He truly grasped the spirit of his mission and ventured forth with idealism, intense commitment, and passion to reach high goals. Despite being told repeatedly that there would be virtually no community support, Hatch leapt at the challenge. He had the ability “to call forth from people their idealism and commitment; and a reckless abandon founders need,” to become their rock and foundation for the community.” It was with this enthusiasm in 1935, that this one man, Fr. Paul Hatch brought twenty-two very young men from New York to Rock Hill to establish an Oratory. These were priests, lay brothers, and seminarians.

From the time the Oratorians came to Rock Hill, the work was challenging. Hatch repeated the bishop's warnings to the young seminarians that life would be demanding and absolute trust must be given to "Divine Providence." He promised them nothing. He said there were more Catholics in China than in South Carolina. Despite their limited numbers, their purpose would be to care for the poor and sick, preach


39. Fr. Edward V. Wahl (hereinafter referred to as Wahl), In Search of an Oratory, Quotes Fr. Addington who came to the Oratory on the train with Wahl. (Unpublished manuscript, Rock Hill Oratory: 1983), 4-5.

40. The Rock Hill Oratory, "About Us."
simply, and adapt to the needs of the community in an area that they were soon to learn was quite different from the North.\footnote{Wahl, \textit{In Search of an Oratory}, 4-5.}

Edward Wahl, age eighteen, recalled the day he got off the train in Rock Hill on August 26, 1935 at 4:30 a.m., along with two other seminarians and Hatch. He remembered it clearly for several reasons. It was the Feast of St. Zephyrinus, the day Senator Huey Long from Louisiana was assassinated, and the day Senator Tom Connolly from Texas spoke about exempting seminarians from the draft. Another arrival, William Coyle, recalled when he and another would-be Oratorian arrived and the Rock Hill stop was called out on the train, they tipped the porter their last thirty-five cents and both welcomed each other to “Hock Hill.” The young seminarians and priests came together and all went to St. Philip's Hospital at 6:00 a.m. to meet the sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis from Peoria, Illinois. The nuns had taken over the former Fennell Infirmary and were fixing it up, as it was in dreadful condition and extremely run down after years of neglect. The sisters were to start a hospital and minister to the sick of the entire community.\footnote{Wahl, \textit{In Search of an Oratory}, 9-10. Recollection of “Hock Hill” from Fr. William Coyle (hereinafter Coyle), “Fr. William Looks Back,” \textit{Oratorian Letter}, May-June, 1960.}

When the Jesuits left the area, Bishop Walsh at Hatch's request, arranged for the Order of St. Francis to purchase the infirmary and dispatched sisters to the area to nurse. The infirmary had been owned by Dr. W. B. Ward and he and a group of over thirty-five doctors had approached Hatch for help.\footnote{Brown, \textit{A City without Cobwebs}, 269-270. Although the Oratorians were involved with the purchase, they had nothing to do with hospital operations.}
The men then went to the Oratory for breakfast, which was also extremely run down, dismal, and filthy. It was an old sixteen-room Victorian home located in the white community on the corner of Charlotte and Aiken Avenues. However, since it had been sublet as apartments that were left to deteriorate, it offered no warm welcome. Conditions were dreary. Since there were twenty-five residents and only silverware for eight, the men ate in shifts for months on long benches at a table covered with linoleum. No one was allowed to talk during meals, and the young seminarians felt it was so they would not complain about the food. The Oratorians, however, quickly engaged to the mission, and in August 1935 there were twenty-five dedicated and ambitious men embarking on their journey.44

Additional rooms were set aside for boys who were orphaned or from broken homes. The men called this the Neri Mission Institute for Boys. There were no orphanages in the region so the institute was welcomed by the bishop. In 1935 a large contribution from Catherine Kelly from New York allowed for a chapel and additional quarters. By 1937, the Oratorians built Faber Hall which was a two story brick building, to accommodate classrooms and a dormitory for the boys. Hatch also had visions of eventually providing an institute for orphaned girls. To provide for the boys, the men maintained a farm which had milk cows and a team of mules. They were also responsible for tending to the upkeep of the grounds and buildings. Fortunately, Fr. John

Nedley from downstate New York had experience with animals, and there was a brother who was a skilled mechanic and excellent at pounding nails and shingles.45

The men set out to evangelize within a 3,500 square mile area but still lived the communal life. This was an intimidating task at this time because only one-half of one percent of the population of the whole state of South Carolina was Catholic. In addition, the men were tremendously overextended with travelling, educating the boys, and ministering to the populations in this huge territory.46 It was overwhelming.

After their arrival in Rock Hill, the Oratorians made several attempts to start churches in addition to St. Anne's. In 1936, Mrs. Church Carroll of York, South Carolina, offered her home to the Oratorians and Harry Phelan, a benefactor from Texas, gave a large donation which enabled them to convert the home to a small hospital and church. Divine Saviour Hospital and Church were established and were also staffed by the Franciscan sisters who administered St. Philip’s in Rock Hill. To grow the flock quickly, in 1938 an effort was made in nearby Fort Mill to establish another church. The venture soon failed, as there were only a small number of Catholics in that area and they preferred to worship in Rock Hill. Land had been purchased and a church was built with a large donation from Nellie O'Neill, a benefactor from Wisconsin. Once the church closed and the property sold, Miss O'Neill's $2,000 contribution was returned, at her insistence.47

45. Madden, Catholic in South Carolina, 244-246, 254; Coyle, Oratorian Letter, gives insight into the farm. The name Farber was in honor of Frederick William Farber, an English Oratorian.


47. Madden, Catholics in South Carolina, 254.
The Oratorians were keenly aware of their obligation to reach the black community. In 1938 a small school and social center for the black community were opened on South Trade Street, now named Dave Lyle Boulevard, which was listed in the *National Catholic Directory* as the Holy Providence House. This was the beginning of a school, but is now remembered as the distribution center for used clothing that it became when it closed. In 1940, the situation became a little brighter when Julia A. Virgin, a New York benefactor, gave a large donation for a black school with a library and a church to the Oratorians. Property on Haynes and Lige streets was purchased, and the building already on the property was adapted. The school was named St. Julia, the Virgin. Although no masses were held there, a school with a library for black children for the first and second grades was established, which operated through 1942. The land was later sold to the Mt. Olive Methodist Church which held services there for the next thirty years until they relocated onto Ogden Road, near what is currently St. Mary’s Church.  

By Christmas 1941, the Oratory had what they called their own "Pearl Harbor." It resulted from a lack of funds, and they were living from meal to meal. Usually, a meal consisted of a crust of bread, sugar water, and maybe half of a canned peach. Edward Wahl recalled some nights when dinner consisted of only a piece of dry bread with sugar

48. Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina*, 279-280. David Boone, Interviews by author, Rock Hill, September 1, 2015 and December 15, 2015, Rock Hill, assert that there was in fact a school up to second grade with library and church that was established in 1938 and closed. When a huge donation by Julia A. Virgin, a wealthy New Yorker was given, it continued. Madden in *Catholics in South Carolina*, downplays the first school and asserts that possibly the Oratorians found their mission and the actual schooling began with Julia A. Virgin’s donation.
The Oratory owed thousands of dollars to the grocer, butcher, and particularly the John Sexton Company, which was a large food wholesaler. All creditors had been patient, knowing the Oratorians were caring for one hundred and fifty boys in the Neri Institute for Boys. However, the utility companies were not as gracious and periodically the Oratory had neither heat nor electricity. The men were given the choice by the bishop of going home, joining the Diocese of Charleston or another approved diocese, or toughing it out. Thankfully, some stayed and the Oratory continued. It was this difficult time when "we really became a community," stated Edward Wahl. These determined individuals begged and some worked part-time to bring money into the community. The Oratorians remained so poor that both St. Mary’s College in Kentucky and St. Meinrad Seminary in Indiana waited for tuition payments for a long time after having trained the young men Rock Hill men sent to these colleges for education.49

The school for boys used the limited resources that the Oratory had, but although it helped many, it was discontinued. It did help establish direction for its members who were not content with just ministering. The school closed in 1942 when many of the men were entering the military service during World War II. Although the closing was unfortunate, it could be considered a blessing as the Oratorians were ill equipped to teach, travelling long distances to minister to their huge territory, and there were many financial hardships.50


The Oratorians call the years from 1934-1947 the years of "searching for the Oratory." From the late 1930’s there were conflicts, political aggressions, invasions, and genocides involving most of the world, culminating in World War II. These larger concerns in Europe led to little communication between the Oratorians and Rome. The Oratorians, however, were finally redeemed when Fr. Charles Naldi, Procurator General from the Oratory of Florence, Italy, came to visit in 1947. He was preparing for the 1948 Oratorian Congress. Naldi was impressed with the Rock Hill members and began educating them in Oratorian charisms, (the gifts or talents that flow from God), because they never had the opportunity of contact with other oratories. The Oratorians were challenged to mature spiritually and learn about Oratorian life. The men had become so involved in social justice with the issues of segregation, poverty, and anti-Catholic sentiment, that they knew little of Oratorian roots. When Naldi left, he gave the Oratorians a rosary used by St. Philip Neri. This was a remembrance that Neri had struggled through tremendous difficulties and emerged victorious. Naldi talked with Bishop Walsh, and in October 1947 the official pontifical status was granted to the Oratorians.51

Prior to this time, the Oratorians operated in the manner of diocesan priests and were on probation until the community could become an Oratory of the Pontifical Right. There were now nineteen priests, but Hatch, their founder, was no longer a part of the Oratory. He had suffered a breakdown after all of his hard work and never experienced

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the realization of his efforts and achievements. He did, however, spend the remainder of his years in a fulfilling life as a diocesan priest in another part of the United States. The priests who had taken vows were given positions in other areas of the United States as diocesan priests and were not allowed to be called “Oratorians.” Nonetheless, those remaining as Oratorians, endured hardships but established the direction and path they had long sought.  

The rules have not changed, and all Oratorians reside in the same community their entire lives. They are not transferred to different localities, as are diocesan priests. Permanence allows them to "establish spiritual roots to the circumstances of time and place." They worked and continue to work with all races and religions at all levels of society. Soon after their arrival, they worked with the community by helping to establish labor unions which advocated for better working conditions, since both brown lung disease and unfair pay practices were rampant. They fed transients, “knights of the road,” gave food vouchers to the hungry, and referred families to a Catholic run thrift store. The Oratorians supported the Catawba Indians in their attempts to reclaim land rights and also attempted to help Italian immigrants establish self-sufficiency in agriculture. Their work progressed to meeting the needs of the black population in the segregated South and evolved to recreation, education, conversions, civil rights, and

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52. Madden, Catholics in South Carolina, 254, 279. The priests who made up the Oratory were Frs. Gerald Ernst, who was the provost, Vincent Scharff, John Haak, Maurice Shean, Myles Morris, John Nedley, William Coyle, Ralph Maher, Joseph Richmond, Christopher Barry, Edward Wahl, Aloysius Kaszuba, Edward Chmely, James Sharples, Francis Winum, Henry Tevlin, Theodore Cilwick, John Gallagher, and Timothy Sullivan; Information on the exclusion of those who took vows given by: David Boone, interview by author, April 27, 2016.
eventually integration. As times changed, so did the Oratorians and their mission, as they adapted to the changing needs of the community.

Chapter Two: Our Story Begins and St. Mary’s Church is Born

Father Edward Wahl’s Vision

My Jesus, if you uphold me, I shall not fail.

—St. Philip Neri

On January 6, 1945, the Feast of the Epiphany, Edward Wahl was ordained and officially became a priest. There had never been a time in his life when he wondered, "If I become a priest:" it was always, "When I become one." He wanted to do what both St. Francis and St. Philip Neri had done and work with the poor. He knew that his chances of doing his life work and striving for social justice would be better served in a southern city than in the small hamlet of Garrison, New York. He was told by another priest when he decided to follow Hatch, after hearing him speak at a club he joined in high school called the Friars of the Atonement, that "another one of our members is "hatched."¹ Edward Wahl was reared in a tightly knit Catholic family wherein his parents readily supported their children’s goals to enter the clergy. He was the first of the Wahl’s to join the Oratory, and was followed by two younger brothers, Richard and Joseph, who became priests and eventually joined him at the Oratory.²

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¹ Wahl, In Search of an Oratory, 8.

² Boone interview, December 15, 2015. Fr. Edward Wahl founded St. Mary’s and his brother Richard served as pastor years later. Joseph Wahl served at the Oratory, but not St. Mary’s.
One month after his ordination, Fr. Edward Wahl, assigned to work with the black population in Rock Hill, visited sick African Americans at St. Philip Hospital, distributed Catholic and secular literature, and did contact work with both the black and white communities. In April 1945, Wahl approached Bishop Emmet M. Walsh of the Diocese of Charleston about forming a black Catholic Church and working within the black community. He had been approached by four nonwhite Catholic women with one boy and two baby girls and told the bishop he was confident the women would be of "immense help in the organization" of a parish. Wahl’s priority was locating a site and building for a church, but he also addressed the lack of accessible recreational facilities for African Americans in the area. He proposed a church and recreational facility after speaking to both blacks and whites and all agreed that recreation was, as he told Bishop Walsh, "the need." Candidly, he told Walsh, that the "harvest is ready although it will not be a large one." His belief was that building an attractive church would show the "colored" of Rock Hill that the "Catholic Church is really interested in the Negro."

Wahl’s vision was more than simply a church with a recreational facility. He foresaw opportunities for schooling, a credit union, and clinical works administered on the basis of financial and domestic issues, and caring for the aged population.


5. Ibid.
St. Philip Neri, who saw youth congregating in Rome without a mission, Wahl was concerned about the teenagers he observed walking up and down the streets. They were forming groups on the street corners and wandering aimlessly with nowhere to go. Wahl increasingly became convinced if he could do a good job and create recreational activities for the youth, he could break prejudice, win converts, and assure the future for a parish. He unofficially met with the boys and formed a club, although there was no regular meeting place. When a group of twenty boys gave him a scarf as a Christmas present, he realized he had been accepted completely. By the time Wahl approached the bishop for a church and recreation center, he held lofty goals and great aspirations.  

The Catholic Church historically did segregate parishes, as did Protestant denominations, but it differed from their congregations because it did not allow each their independence. Many Protestant denominations allowed any competent lay person to preach, but Catholics educated and ordained their priests. Catholic Churches within a geographical area were all subject to the same jurisdiction, usually the bishop, even though the congregations were separate. The Catholic Church was and remains one, even though races may choose to maintain their separate and distinct parishes. Many southerners rationalized that like prefers to consort with like, meaning that black persons prefer to worship with their own, and whites prefer the same. Consequently, there was no need to mix or change from a century-old practice.  

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7. Dolores Egger Labbé, Jim Crow Comes to Church (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 2-3, 86-87, 89. In her published thesis on parishes in Louisiana, Labbé asserts black or white churches are not mandated. People choose their church and often there was resentment when others attend "their church."  

8. Packard, American Nightmare, 159.
The Oratorians prayed to St. Joseph, promising that if they could start a church it would be named after Joseph’s wife, Mary. Wahl received the bishop's approval and was told that any money raised would be matched by the bishop. He raised $17,000, and with the match there was a total of $34,000. A lot was purchased and a small church was built, which today is a chapel attached to the current larger church. The total cost of building was $37,557.80.9 The bishop and Wahl worked through obstacles before the approval. There was a question of the city providing adequate sewer lines. Another was that the city discussed the possibility of building a recreational center in the black community. The bishop’s concern was that it might become rowdy and be built too close to the church. Nevertheless, the bishop gave the go-ahead and construction began.10

In the beginning, there were five Catholics, not families, but individuals consisting of one Cuban, one Haitian, and three persons who had worked with the sisters at St. Philip’s Hospital and had been converted. All original members of the church community are now deceased. During this period in the South there was strict segregation and very few people of any race were Catholic. Even at the Catholic hospital where all religions and races were treated, blacks were treated only in the basement of the facility to adhere to state law.11

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9. Boone interview, September 1, 2015. St. Joseph is the patron saint of the Universal Church. He was a working man, a carpenter. The cost of building of $37,557.80 was obtained from the bid sent to Bishop Walsh from Southeastern Construction, August 1, 1946. Oratory Archives.


On January 23, 1946, Wahl asked the bishop for a dedication date. He reported that Christmas mass served 120 people. Realistically, this was not the regular attendance since there were now only six Catholics in the parish. However, Wahl told the bishop that many were not attending church because roads were unpaved in the black community, and during the rainy season roads turned into rivers of runoff and mud. Nonetheless, the church dedication took place, and the completion of the parish hall, named Blessed Martin de Porres Recreation Center, was celebrated later that year on July 4, 1946 upon its completion. Since it was the only supervised venue for recreation for black children, about one hundred teenagers excitedly attended this dedication.12

In 1947, the Catholic population had not grown and Catholics remained at only one-half of one percent of South Carolina's population.13 There was not only racial segregation, but prejudice for practicing any non-Protestant religions. Fr. Henry Tevlin, who was the assistant pastor of St. Mary's from 1948, stated in an account he wrote when describing the community, that when St. Mary's was opened, it was not embraced with open arms. One of the black preachers in the area regularly raved to his congregants about what a terrible place St. Mary's was and admonished them to keep their children away. A curious man from that congregation decided to pay a visit to St. Mary’s to see for himself. Pleasantly surprised, he became a member of St. Mary's.14

12. Madden, Catholics in South Carolina, 280-281.


14. Tevlin, unpublished account on Community Conditions, undated, St. Mary Church Archives.
There were many preconceptions non-Catholics had about this religion. They accused Catholics of being clannish because they ran their own schools, were overly rigid and strict, and had peculiar religious practices. It was considered unusual that priests and nuns could not marry, most Catholics had large families, and they seemingly owed their first allegiance to the Pope. When there was strong immigration into the United States, many of these Catholic immigrants came to this country poor, uneducated, and with their own ethnic identities. It was difficult for them to assimilate into northern or southern society because of both ethnic and religious beliefs and they were perceived as outsiders. Those immigrants who migrated to the South had few clergy or churches of their own, and without leaders many had lost their Catholic religion.\textsuperscript{15}

Prejudice against Catholics was so strong, that in the early to mid-nineteen hundreds there were as many as sixty anti-Catholic newspapers printed in the United States weekly. Their one sole mission was to attack the church and destroy its power in the states. One such paper was \textit{The Menace}, which existed until the 1930's and claimed a weekly distribution of 1,469,400 readers. It is often compared to the current \textit{National Enquirer} which had a distribution of only 1,000,000 readers in 2006. This paid subscription newspaper, made many dubious proclamations, informing the public nationwide of issues ranging from the enslavement of women in convents to the notion that Catholics had assassinated former presidents.\textsuperscript{16}

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Even in the North there were many stories of discriminatory practices against Catholics. Catholics were outcasts and not allowed in certain stores, fired from jobs, encountered vandalism in their homes, endured malicious insults, and often were physically removed from government buildings. This prejudice continued and was even a factor in John F. Kennedy losing votes in southern states in the 1960 election. When, Edward Wahl’s brother, Fr. Joseph Wahl, arrived in Rock Hill in 1947, he noted that some Protestants alleged that Catholics had tails. Some also strongly believed the white priests were violating segregation laws by being in a black community.

The Growing Early Church

Despite prejudice and allegations, youth congregated at St. Mary's with the approval of their parents, and this drew the curious to the parish. St. Mary's became known as "The Catholic" and it was a title of respect. Wahl recalled that in order to maintain strict moral codes, dances were by invitation only. The youth were well supervised to ensure that dancing was polite and wholesome. When girls left the social


21. Interviews with Boone, parishioners, John Ellis, Melvin Snow Roseboro, Etta Zeigler, all affirm this designation. Archival correspondence and Common Sense use this term.
gathering, they were given cards stating the time they left. They would give the cards to their parents and this would ensure that they had gone straight home.  

The church's population slowly grew and community work continued, mainly with youth. The first baptized convert was Mack Gaither on April 5, 1947. His father, John, converted on his death bed on October 2, 1949. When John Gaither was ill, Wahl visited him several times a week, and then conducted his funeral at St. Mary's. Lester Gaither, who converted at age eighteen, stated that becoming a Catholic was more than a religious change but a "racial and emotional revolution in the midst of a changing world." His parents allowed him and his siblings to attend The Catholic even though his parents were counseled by others to forbid them to become involved in its activities. The recreational center soon became the highlight of the neighborhood for the black youth of Rock Hill.

In April 1948, the first issue of *Common Sense* was distributed. It was a monthly publication written by Wahl. Its content contained articles about the parish, important issues, and prayer. It provided a means of communication with parishioners and non-Catholics in the neighborhood. It worked to stir interest in the church and also served as a major fundraiser, because it was mailed to parishes in other states. Donations came from all over the country in the following years. The publication was short, with only a few pages, but producing it was labor intensive. There were no computers in

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1948, copy was first handwritten, then typed into stencil, reproduced, hand stapled, and stuffed into envelopes. The newsletter stated there were now seventeen nonwhite Catholics and offerings totaling $9.00 per month, which Wahl declared did not pay the water bill. There were weekly movies at the parish costing .15 to .35. Among the movies screened, were *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Captain Fury*, *First Love*, and *East Side of Heaven*.\(^{25}\) The movies were a huge success and well attended. During this time period, if youth wished to attend a theatre, they would have to somehow manage to get to Ft. Mill, which was over ten miles distant. There were no theatres to accommodate blacks in Rock Hill, although there were several for whites. A theatre for the black population did not open in Rock Hill until 1953.\(^{26}\)

In the May 1948 issue, Wahl published an article on Civil Rights. It was favorable towards President Truman, who had "turned the spotlight on this issue." Wahl wrote that not all whites were against the Civil Rights Bill, but some politicians in South Carolina were strongly against it. The church advocated the right to vote and urged all to get out and do it. The publication related the story of an old black man who uttered, "I want the same equality at the ballot box as I have at the tax window." The most dramatic statement in this same issue of *Common Sense* concerned being Catholic. Wahl asserted that the church understood the difficulty in being Catholic and one of the main difficulties

\(^{25}\) *Common Sense*, April 1948, St. Mary Church Archives.

\(^{26}\) Wahl, undated interview for Historical Issue *Common Sense*, St. Mary Church Archives; Brown, *A City Without Cobwebs*, 250, states by 1952 there were five theatres for whites (Grand, Palmetto (formerly Omar), Stevenson, Carolina, Pix) and three drive-ins with the Carver Theatre opening soon (1953) to accommodate black persons.
was exclusion. Many parishioners felt they were excluded from all non-church related social events within their community.  

In an attempt to get the community involved, in October 1948 the church attempted a revival. The priests called it a mission, but no one knew what they were talking about until they decided to rename it “revival,” a term with which most denominations were familiar. There were close to four hundred attending, but only five Catholics. They followed up with instructional classes and had fourteen enroll. 

In May 1949, *Common Sense* stated there were 14 million blacks in the United States and 8 million did not belong to any church. Of those who did attend church, approximately 5,500,000 were Protestant and 350,000 Catholic. Due to a small membership, the number one priority of the Catholic Church became conversion. By May 1950, there were 15,000,000 blacks in this country and 380,753 of them were Catholic. This equated to one in forty blacks who claimed Catholic as their religion of choice. Wahl asserted that in addition to the race issue, there was a prejudice against Catholics, compounded by a shortage of priests of all color in the South, to spread the good word. He supported interracial meetings of groups and societies and conversion in order to encourage more black Catholic priests and nuns. There was an article written by a visitor to St. Mary's who wrote that she attended the first mass of a black Catholic priest in Washington, D.C. at the Little Flower Church. A Baptist minister and the Catholic 

27. *Common Sense*, May 1948, St. Mary Church Archives.  
28. *Common Sense*, October 1948, St. Mary Church Archives.  
29. *Common Sense*, May 1949, St. Mary Church Archives.
priest exchanged pulpits for Brotherhood Week and the churches overflowed with all races and nationalities, without incident. The reason for her story was her belief that the Christian community is built around the altar.\textsuperscript{30}

St. Mary's remained nonwhite during these years. This was not by choice, because all races were welcomed. There was an active girls' club with rummage sales to help the community, parish outings, crafts for girls, dances, religious education classes, novenas, and Sunday recreational activities that started in the afternoon and continued until 9 p.m. However, in January 1950, Tevlin said the bank balance of $66.22 was the lowest ever. He also mentioned the prejudice endured by being a Catholic and once again promoted the fostering of interracial meetings and groups. He strongly believed one way to achieve this goal was conversion and praying for more black priests and nuns. The numbers were low, and in the United States at this time there were only forty black priests nationwide.\textsuperscript{31}

In 1951, Wahl reported in the historic five year issue of \textit{Common Sense} that the first parish organization, the Young Men's Club, was doing well. It was made up of both Catholics and non-Catholic's. Activities were abundant. There was a girls' club which had recently started a book lending library. The girls were also being given lessons in food preparation by parishioner Perry L. Wooden. The comment was made that these young women would be prepared for cooking when the right man came along. The Catholic Interracial Council formed in Rock Hill. There were summer retreats for men,

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Common Sense}, May 1949 and May, 1950, St. Mary Church Archives.

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Common Sense}, January, 1950, St. Mary Church Archives.
successful Sunday night holy hours with both Catholics and non-Catholics in attendance, monthly Rosary Society breakfasts, and the First Friday Club was thriving.\footnote{32} The First Friday Club collected a dollar a month per person. It had been initiated by Wahl early in his tenure when he made frequent trips to the North to advocate for his mission work at St. Mary’s. Contributions came mainly from the North. Donors contributed, offered prayers, and sent funds which often came from profits from social events such as card parties.\footnote{33}

In 1951, the church also had to consider the financial needs of the nonwhite community. Many persons desired to send their children to college, purchase their own homes, or have a little bit of a better life. There was a need for credit, indicated by the large number of high interest loan companies in the area. Race and lower incomes made it difficult, if not impossible, to secure loans from banks, particularly because many African Americans had no collateral. On February 21, 1951, there was an organizational meeting held at St. Mary’s recreational center to establish a credit union. Eight persons attended, each paid $8.00, and then signed an application for a charter to form a credit union. Since the location was on Crawford Road, the name became the Crawford Federal Credit Union. Membership was extended to include church members, the social action committee in Rock Hill, credit union employees and their immediate family, and anyone associated with the St. Mary’s recreation center, since the church did not have enough members to form a credit union. The application for a charter was submitted, and by

\footnote{32. \textit{Common Sense}, Historic Issue 1946/1951, St. Mary Church Archives.}

\footnote{33. Rukstelis, \textit{bRINGING iT aLL bACK hOME}, 26-27.}
March it was approved by the Director of the Bureau of Federal Credit Unions, under Charter #7192.\textsuperscript{34}

It was also in November 1951 that Fr. Edward Wahl became a chaplain in the army. He served in the Far East in Okinawa, Japan, until August 1954, when he returned to civilian life at the Oratory. He was replaced by Fr. Henry Tevlin who was promoted from assistant pastor, and Fr. Timothy Sullivan became the assistant.\textsuperscript{35} Activities at the church continued and expanded despite Wahl’s absence. Troop 157 of the Boy Scouts of America formed and met at St. Mary’s. The packs included Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Explorer Scouts. Samuel (Sammy) Reid was the Scoutmaster. Reid received a great deal of criticism from the black community because he had converted to Catholicism. He was often confronted by ministers of other faiths as well as members of the neighborhood who questioned his faith and the work at The Catholic. They questioned the practice of receiving communion, praying the Stations of the Cross, and his interactions with the white clergy.\textsuperscript{36}

John Ellis of St. Mary’s recalled that his mother believed the church was a good influence. Even though his family were Baptists, she allowed him to join the Cub Scouts in his early childhood. Tevlin conducted the Cubs and Reid was in charge of the older boys. Tevlin understood the boys and stated that sometimes the boys were full of energy.

\textsuperscript{34} A History of the Credit Union, unsigned document in St. Mary's Archives, accessed October 29, 2015.

\textsuperscript{35} Wahl, \textit{In Search of an Oratory}, 30.

\textsuperscript{36} Rukstelis, \textit{bRINGING iT aLL bACK hOME}, interview with Samuel Reid, June 30, 1992, 15-16.
and thought of themselves as men, while at other times they acted like children.\(^{37}\) Reid was extremely influential in leading young men, and sponsored over fifty persons for baptism into the church from the time of his conversion in 1948.\(^{38}\)

Tevlin asserted that St. Mary’s reputation had two sides to it. Some thought it was the best thing that ever came to Rock Hill, while others thought that having the devil live next door would be better than The Catholic. Those opposed stated that the church was taking children directly to hell through dancing, cards, and soft drinks.\(^{39}\) However, Wahl stated the others believed the church had earned their respect. White persons would call for recommendations for dependable individuals to hire. There were opportunities for boys to do yard work; even the *Evening Herald* recruited news delivery boys through the church. He strongly believed that to practice St. Philip Neri’s techniques and to get to know the community well, gather people, build friendship and community spirit, and to provide a positive influence through good deeds, would make a better world.\(^{40}\)

By 1953, there were sixty-four church members, and since 1946 there had been a total of seventy-five baptisms. The church was proud to announce that two young adults had become the first parishioners to graduate from Catholic colleges.\(^{41}\) The ultimate hope, however, was to establish a school to "develop a sound Catholic spirit in the

\(^{37}\) Ellis Interview, November 13, 2015; *Common Sense*, Historic Issue 1946/1951, St. Mary Church Archives.

\(^{38}\) Boone interview, December 15, 2015.

\(^{39}\) *Common Sense*, Historic Issue 1946/1951.

\(^{40}\) Wahl, undated interview for Historical Issue *Common Sense*, St. Mary Church Archives

\(^{41}\) *Common Sense*, Historic Issue 1946/1951.
members of the parish, since they are all converts." Tevlin believed this would also provide higher educational standards. St. Mary's started a school fund with money obtained from donations usually obtained each year by soliciting for funds, the sale of used clothing at bargain sales, and saving coupons, e.g., from the Friendship Sack of Gold Medal Flour. 42 The church sought support from all over the United States to anyone who would listen. In a letter written to a former classmate in August 1953, Tevlin expressed his reluctance to plead for funds, but alluded to the monthly collection which totaled around $30.00. In response, Fr. Phil sent his prayers, best wishes, and $5.00. 43 In August 1953, funding was adequate to build a playground with basketball courts, which allowed the youth a place to practice. 44

In 1954, Tevlin wrote that the city population was about 60 percent white and 40 percent black. He stated that not much had changed over the past decade. The paved roads still ended when they came to the black area and some residents still drew water from wells. He asserted that South Carolina's Governor Byrnes was still attempting to extend segregation proposing a three percent sales tax on goods used in South Carolina in order to fund more black schools. Tevlin felt this was this was to impress the courts with the idea that separate but equal was the answer and to show that money was allocated appropriately to fund these schools. However, the U.S. Supreme Court would soon be

42. Tevlin, unpublished account During 1954, St. Mary Church Archives.

43. Tevlin, letter dated August 15, 1953, St. Mary Church Archives.

ruling on integration of public schools, and the church was anxiously awaiting the
decision in the hope that it would end this separate but equal fallacy.45

Tevlin wrote an unpublished statement about community conditions which stated
his opinion of the black schools. The standards were low and the schools were crowded.
In an effort to alleviate this, children were pushed through the system. He referred to a
fifth grade child who could barely read "Jesus and I" in the catechism. Many students
lacked skills in the basics of English, reading, and spelling. To help students succeed if
they wished to go to college and in anticipation of integration, the church gave remedial
courses. Further, many attended school only in the football or basketball seasons so they
could be on the teams. Truancy was a huge problem and there was little effort on behalf
of the truant officer to address it. Tevlin strongly believed the substandard living
conditions and segregation made the church's efforts difficult. The "what's the use"
attitude that many held had to change. A living wage, decent jobs in the textile mills,
integration, and education were needed in the black community. The prior year, four
members of St. Mary's congregation went to Xavier University in New Orleans and
found it very difficult because they lacked mastery of elementary English in reading and
spelling. Tevlin further asserted that youth often felt there was no reason to attend school
because when they graduated they saw no opportunities for jobs requiring education. He
realized the obstacles faced by the Oratorians with their missionary activities dealing with

45. Tevlin, unpublished account, spring 1954, St. Mary’s Church Archives.
the black community’s below standard living conditions and South’s segregation patterns could sometimes be overwhelming, but knew education was a priority.\textsuperscript{46}

Black educators, in this segregated South, struggled to improve conditions in schools, but fared poorly, in spite of their own educations. Across the street from St. Mary’s was Emmett Scott School, founded in 1920 as the first public school for blacks in Rock Hill. It included twelve grades until 1956 when it became a junior high and high school. It closed in 1970 when Rock Hill finally desegregated schools.\textsuperscript{47}

W. H. (Wade Hampton) Witherspoon taught school for forty-six years from 1930 until 1976. He was black, born in Rock Hill, and became a principal. The system called him, in the segregated school, a "teaching principal." If a person was certified to teach, he or she would also be a principal if needed in the black schools. It was a way to cover more than one position for the cost of one salary. Witherspoon’s education included both Bachelors and Masters Degrees, but he was never paid as much as white teachers with similar credentials. His first position was at Emmett Scott, home of the "Scottites". He taught at Emmett Scott for seven years and made $585.00 in 1930. He became the first principal at Castle Heights School and then Edgewood when they were opened.

Witherspoon stated that South Carolina teachers' tests were designed to prove Negro teachers did not know as much as the white teachers. Therefore, they should not be paid as much. Witherspoon acknowledged that Rock Hill was not perfect and probably never

\textsuperscript{46} Tevlin, unpublished account, Spring 1954.

would be and stated that was all right, as he wasn't perfect either.\textsuperscript{48} Children attended Emmett Scott, and although the state did not allocate funds to the extent they did to white schools for books and facilities, youth were educated, established long term relationships, and often moved on to higher education. They did the best they could with what was offered.\textsuperscript{49}

The community attempted to work together. Community leaders attended a meeting with Dr. George S. Mitchell, the Executive Director of the South Carolina Southern Regional Council, (SCSRC), at the Oratory where subsequent meetings were held. Their purpose was to prepare Rock Hill for the changes taking place in the South and avoid any possible violence or legal actions, while attempting to establish a cooperative environment. As a result, the Rock Hill Council on Human Relations, (RHCHR), in March 1954 was established. It was bi-racial and initially consisted of ten community members which included Rock Hill's Mayor Emmett Jerome, several ministers, prominent businessmen, President J. H. Goudlock of Friendship College, a reporter from \textit{The Evening Herald}, and Tevlin from St. Mary's. This council realized that no matter how the Supreme Court decided the issue on school integration, the community needed to be prepared for the emotional effects of the decision. The council worked together to involve influential community members of all races.\textsuperscript{50}

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\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{48} J. Edward Lee and Anne E. Beard, \textit{Rock Hill South Carolina, Gateway to the New South} (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1999), 63, 69-71.}

\textsuperscript{49} Bettye Finley, interview by author, Rock Hill, September 24, 2015.

\textsuperscript{50} Henry Tevlin, \textit{Formation of The Rock Hill Council on Human Relations, Notes}. St. Mary Church Archives; The following allow insight into the RHCHR: Minutes Council Meeting, September 20, 2015.}
\end{flushright}
The community prepared for the changes to come in the South. The Oratorians continued their mission to empower people and make Rock Hill the great town it was destined to be. The Oratorians relentlessly fought for unions in the mills in the belief they would bring equality to workers in job placement, pay, and opportunity. They continued to educate and convert with help from the sisters, and to provide services for youth. Both the black and white communities foresaw that the next decades would bring about many changes. One of the most influential Oratorians was about to enter the scene.

**Brother David Boone**

David Boone is from Kentucky, a place he describes as the “Bourbon Capital of the World.” At age 16, Boone entered St. Mary’s, a seminary in Hardin’s Creek, Kentucky, which was originally started in a distillery building. It was about twenty-five miles from his home in New Haven, Kentucky. In 1951, at age 18, he was accepted into the Oratory. However, it was not until September 1959 that Boone was permanently assigned to join Tevlin at St. Mary’s as the director of what is now called the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). He served the parish for fifty-two years until 2011 and still serves and lives at the Oratory. Boone was so instrumental in social responsibility and

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1965, Pettus Archives; Boone interview, February 12, 2016. The RHCHR merged with No Room for Racism in 2014 and was later discontinued when the Rock Hill Community Relations Council was formed.

duty in the civil rights movement, that in 2009 he was awarded the Order of the Palmetto.\textsuperscript{52}

Boone met Fr. Joseph Wahl, (Fr. Edward Wahl’s brother), in 1951 at St. Mary’s Seminary College in Kentucky. They developed a friendship that lasted until Wahl passed away in May 2016 at the age of 86. Wahl, before his death, was the oldest living member of the Oratory. Boone learned about the Oratory from Wahl and joined the congregation as a seminarian in 1951. Boone had attended four years of high school and one year of college at St. Mary’s which was run by the Resurrection Fathers from Canada.\textsuperscript{53}

When Boone came to the Oratory, he was 18 years old. For the first year he was on probation. The training was the same for a brother or priest because the decision for choosing an individual’s future was not made early. He worked in Rock Hill at the Oratory and St. Mary’s doing a lot of manual labor, which included grounds keeping and maintaining the buildings. In 1954, Boone was sent to Washington, D.C. to the Catholic House of Studies, then back to Rock Hill's College of Commerce to become an accountant because one was needed to help out at the credit union. While in Washington, Boone stated that for over a year he did a lot of cooking and became quite proficient in menu planning for large groups. When he was sent back to Rock Hill permanently in

\textsuperscript{52} The Order of the Palmetto is the highest civilian honor which is awarded by the governor. In 2009 Boone was given the award for his efforts in social justice by Governor Sanford. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, last modified 2015, accessed November 11, 2015. http://archives.sc.gov/recordshield/orderofpalmetto/Documents100Alpha1971.2010.pdf.

\textsuperscript{53} Boone interview, Rock Hill, February 12, 2016.
1956, he did whatever necessary for the congregation and ordered food, kept the cars in running condition, and the buildings in good repair.  

Boone insisted on becoming a brother rather than a priest because at the time there were a lot of priests and he believed he could be more effective working behind the scenes as a brother. Little did he realize that before he was to assume the permanent recreational directorship at St. Mary’s in 1959, he would get his first tastes of civil rights and would hardly remain behind the scenes. The long awaited Supreme Court decision prohibiting segregation in schools, that Tevlin anxiously awaited, would soon be announced in 1954. This decision began to change the nature of the long established southern patterns of segregation in education and it was the Oratorians who seized on the decision to take bold action at St. Anne's School. The Oratorians of Rock Hill, South Carolina and the Catholic Church were soon to become pioneers in the racist South.

54. Boone interviews, September 1, 2015 and December 15, 2015; Boone, “A Brother at the Oratory.”

Chapter Three: The Struggle for Equality Begins, 1954-1960

St. Anne’s School Integration

I sought to hear the voice of God and climbed the topmost steeple, but God declared: “Go down again - I dwell among the people.”

—Cardinal John Henry Newman

The long awaited Supreme Court decision came in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, (1954). On May 17, 1954 this landmark judgment declared that state laws establishing "separate but equal" public schools by race were unconstitutional as facilities were “inherently unequal.” The separate but equal ruling went back to *Plessy v. Ferguson*, (1896), which upheld racial segregation in public facilities.¹

St. Anne Catholic School took the lead to desegregate, even though the court decision did not apply to parochial schools. In 1951, the school had been established for kindergarten, first, and second grades with the school continuing to add one grade per year as the children advanced. There were two teachers who were not clergy. In September 1952, the kindergarten had been discontinued and grade three was added. By September 1954, there were five grades, taught by lay or non-clergy teachers, as the nuns did not arrive until September 1958 to teach. In 1954, the church and school were both located on Saluda Street and the membership in the church was solely white.²


². Fr. Robert Sweeney (hereinafter referred to as Sweeney), letter to Rev. Paul J. Hallinan, March 1959 which gave a summary of the events at St. Anne’s School, Oratory Archives.
The church made the decision to integrate in a meeting in August 1954. Some of the priests who knew the congregation suggested waiting, because they knew that some parents would be opposed to their white children attending school with black children. As a result, the Oratorians feared some students would be withdrawn from the school. A few of them strongly believed that the community was not yet ready. However, the majority of Oratorians favored integration, especially Fr. Timothy Sullivan from St. Mary's. They were concerned about notifying the parents of children already attending St. Anne’s. The Oratorians drafted a letter and made the decision that only black first graders would be admitted, because they believed the older children would not be up to educational standards. Ten white children were immediately withdrawn by their parents, leaving a total of thirty students enrolled in the school for the upcoming fall term.\(^3\)

When St. Anne's and St. Mary's came together to integrate the school in the 1954-1955 school year, St. Mary's sent five students. St. Anne’s became the first integrated school in South Carolina. Since St. Anne’s location was in a white neighborhood, there were rumors that the school would be picketed. The rumors were unfounded and there were no incidents. The normal school day began with mass and then school.\(^4\) The black children were taken to school daily by a car van from St. Mary's. Tevlin drove in the morning and one of the other Oratorians picked them up in the afternoon. There was one small article in the *Evening Herald*, Rock Hill’s local newspaper, about the new students.

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4. Ibid.
Even though there was no fanfare, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was well aware of the integration. Fortunately, there was an informer who would tell the police whenever the KKK had a meeting and what was discussed. The police then told the Oratorians and they would alter the routes to school for a few days.\

There was one incident in 1956 that Boone recalled when the KKK burned a cross in front of the school on a Sunday evening. A parishioner called the fire department and it was extinguished. The next day school was closed, but the children returned on Tuesday to find no evidence of the cross. Most remained unaware of the incident. The news release sent to the news service, stated that a six foot cross was burned and placed at the front door. It compared the event to a similar burning in Rock Hill several weeks prior which a KKK member reported to be a part of a southern pattern. The Klan denied involvement in St. Anne's and said that unauthorized persons using their symbols were responsible. The church described this as the first incident that had occurred in the three years since it had been integrated. Cross burnings were not uncommon in the 1950's, but little notice was given in the newspapers. The newspapers, however, did publish notices of Klan rallies being held, giving the time, date, and place of the event in case the community wished to attend.

5. Boone interview, September 1, 2015; Tevlin letter to Interracial Review advises of ten children withdrawn from St. Anne’s. Tevlin included the one sole article in the Evening Herald in September 1954 which quietly announced the enrollment of five black students.


Overall, the integration at St. Anne’s went smoothly. There were some minor problems at recess, but nothing of concern. Parents of white children were often separated from former friends. Joan Gordon Waks, who attended St. Anne’s at this time, stated that some residents of the black community stopped talking to her parents because she attended an integrated school. The Oratorians had hoped that the black families would come to social functions, but they did not. The teachers noted that the black and white children did not play together, and if a white child in a class was having a birthday party, for example, all children except for the black children would be invited. However, children did adapt to sitting together and often helped each other with school work.

It took another ten years before the public schools established some token integration. The Oratorians believe that a huge factor in their success at St. Anne’s was due to the efforts of the teachers. Most were dedicated and loved all of the children. There was only one incident in 1957 where an older teacher attempted to influence some of the younger educators because she was not entirely in agreement with integration; but this had no major effects.

At this time, some restrictions were placed on acceptance to the school in order to have successful and lasting integration. The Oratorians decided they would only take black or white Catholic children who had prior schooling. They had made two exceptions for children who had never attended school before, but the church felt if they

10. Ibid.
opened their admissions to one group, they would have to open them to all. Many black Protestants attended St. Mary’s kindergarten which was established in 1956, but if they continued on into the first grade at St. Anne’s, there would be a greater percentage of blacks and that would hinder the success of integration. Another problem, which always came up, was money. Most blacks were poor and could not afford the full tuition. Consequently, if white enrollment decreased, so would tuition payments.\(^\text{11}\)

Fr. Robert Sweeney, Pastor of St. Anne's, wrote that the majority of priests in the diocese strongly believed the Oratorians had made a mistake to integrate early and should have waited until the public schools did so. On the other hand, there was moral support twenty-eight miles away in Charlotte because North Carolina's Bishop Waters, also integrated schools in fall 1954. Despite reservations, the Oratorians held to their decision.\(^\text{12}\)

To understand why southern states did not adhere to Supreme Court proceedings, we must look to the basic structure of government. Although the Judicial Branch, Supreme and Federal Courts, evaluate and can overturn laws, it is up to the Legislative Branch, Congress, to make the laws. It is then the Executive Branch, our President and his cabinet, to carry out or enforce them.\(^\text{13}\) When it came down to the state level, South Carolina like most southern states, continued segregation and found ways to work around the federal government. In 1954, James F. Byrnes, formerly on the U.S. Supreme Court,

\(^{11}\) Sweeney letter, March 1959.

\(^{12}\) Ibid.

was Governor of South Carolina. Although he said he was surprised by the decision, he advised all races to use restraint and preserve order. He also asserted that the South would find methods to retain segregation lawfully. Soon individuals, governments, and groups joined a movement called Massive Resistance. This movement used tactics to delay or kill policies in conflict with their commitment to white supremacy. Organizations such as the States Rights League in South Carolina emerged.\(^\text{14}\)

These citizen councils were often called "white-collar-Klans," with membership drawn from many prominent members of the white community. Their tactics ranged from removing books from public libraries and spying on neighbors, to expelling students who favored integration. Their philosophy was not only anti-racial, but anti-union and hostile towards non-Protestant religions such as Judaism and Catholicism. At their height in 1957, their membership throughout the South was approximately 250,000 members\(^\text{15}\).

In 1955, the South Carolina legislature executed a number of policies to maintain white supremacy. One was the adoption of an interposition resolution which did not allow tax money to be spent on any integrated schools. It stated that funds could be restored only if segregation was fully restored. It prohibited members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), from holding government jobs and set up a state commission to investigate this organization.


specifically. In 1958, South Carolina also authorized the state to examine records of all nonprofit groups.\(^\text{16}\)

The United States Congress issued The Southern Manifesto (Declaration of Constitutional Principles) on March 12, 1956. It was a document declaring *Brown* unconstitutional and was signed by 101 southern congressmen, with only 3 southern senators and 24 congressmen refusing to sign. Strom Thurmond, South Carolina Senator, issued the first draft. Governor Byrnes endorsed it and proclaimed he would abandon the state’s public school system if necessary, before he would comply with integration.\(^\text{17}\)

This was not an idle threat. For example, Prince Edward County, Virginia closed all of its public schools for a period of five years rather than educate any children in integrated facilities. It was those families who could not afford to move or send their children to private schools who suffered. In this one county alone, 3,300 children were affected.\(^\text{18}\)

Conditions did not come to this level of closing schools in Rock Hill and separate and unequal continued within the public school system. In 1956, St. Anne’s purchased land on South Jones Street in Rock Hill for a new school, office, and library, and by 1958 there were eight grades. By 1961, there were fifteen black students.\(^\text{19}\)


continued to be the only integrated school in the state of South Carolina throughout the 1950's.

**The Sisters Arrive and Open St. Mary’s Kindergarten**

In the fall of 1955, three Sisters of the Christian Doctrine (RCD sisters) arrived from Nyack, New York and were in need of a convent. Plans were approved and construction began. They lived at St. Philip’s Hospital until the convent’s completion. The building still stands today after it was moved across the street from St. Mary’s, and it is used for an office and prayer groups. Their order’s mission was to teach young children religion, and they quickly rose to and above their assignment. In order to prepare children for first grade at St. Anne’s, St. Mary’s established both a preschool and kindergarten in September 1956.20 The nuns also worked with the girls and taught them arts, crafts, drama, and they went on field days. The priests worked with the boys. They provided after school programs because parents were working and had no daycare. The nuns were known to go from door to door to introduce themselves. Through follow-up home visits, they assisted families. They also kept very strict records. It was not unusual for a sister to go to a child’s home to seek him or her when a child did not show up for preschool or an after school program. They often drove children to St. Anne’s when there was no advance notice of possible Klan activity. The nuns provided a very supervised, nurturing, and caring environment.21

20. Letter in St. Mary’s Archives addressed to parents relating to history and closing of Kindergarten, St. Mary Church Archives, accessed October 29, 2015; Boone interview, September 1, 2015; Rukstelis, *bRING iT aLL bACK home*, 52, 54, 56.

It was not until 1957 that the Oratory bought St. Mary's a Volkswagen bus. There was now adequate transportation to accommodate bigger groups. The main purpose was to take children to St. Anne’s in a larger vehicle; but, it also enabled the church to extend some mobility to the people of the community. Bettye Finley, who joined the church in 1954 at age thirteen, recalled that she stayed within the black community for two reasons. First, no one had cars, so they were confined to what was within walking distance. Second, there were barriers as to where African Americans could safely travel. Within the black community, there were not many sidewalks and most of the side roads were unpaved until well into the 1960's. There was limited bus service along main routes to enable people to go to work, and in 1957 a bus boycott was instituted in Rock Hill. It was one of the first incidents when the black community demanded equal rights and the Rock Hill churches played a part.

**Bus Boycott**

On July 13, 1957, twenty-three year old Addelene Austin (White) got off of a crowded city bus owned by Star Transit Company, rather than stand. It was a hot summer day with the temperature soaring to 96°. After working all day as a maid, a seat on the hot bus was all she needed. She had been offered the only vacant seat by a white passenger, but the driver asked her to move because state law forbade persons of different races to be seated on the same bench. The law also required the driver to set aside a

22. *Common Sense 1946-1971*, Easter 1971 and Boone interview, September 1, 2015 allude to bus; Finley interview, September 24, 2015 on conditions in the black community.
certain number of seats for each race; however, that was at his own discretion. It was customary for the back seats of buses to be reserved for blacks. Austin exited the bus.23

After walking three miles home, Austin reported the incident to the Rev. Cecil A. Ivory of Hermon United Presbyterian Church and officials at the NAACP. The NAACP decided to boycott, even though the entire board did not agree and some wanted a court action. They formed a group called the Committee for the Promotion of Human Rights, (CPHR). The boycott began and came as a surprise to the bus company owner, Paul Knight. Ridership was down from the six hundred blacks who normally rode the bus daily, and some opted to walk or use the car pools that were formed.24 The CPHR issued a letter to Rock Hill’s mayor and city council requesting non-segregated service to begin or that the city negotiate with other companies to provide transportation. The city did nothing.25

In response, a church supported bus service began and contributions came from the community. Tevlin actively supported the boycott and solicited monetary donations to support church buses. St. Mary's recently purchased a Volkswagen bus to transport children to St. Anne's, so it was unavailable for the necessary hours. However, members


of the community with transportation helped others get to work. Unfortunately, many, both black and white, were afraid to participate in the boycott for fear of losing their jobs, so contributions were a silent way to help. There were many quiet supporters (e.g., a York Tech professor, an assistant city manager).  

Although additional contributions came from outside of the Rock Hill area, the road was rough financially because of state restrictions on fare collection. The CPHR issued cards entitling bus rides, with or without a contribution. The boycott continued and Star Transit discontinued service other than in the business district until the company closed on December 13, 1957. The CPHR continued their service until fall 1961 when they discontinued it because financial problems arose. Rock Hill no longer had any public bus service and so it remains to this day.  

Although on the surface this appeared to be a failure, it was not. Austin, as did many other young people from the South, moved to New York City for better job opportunities; however, the black community showed the power of money. By withholding fares and refusing to yield to the circumstances, their efforts put a major company out of business and boosted morale, setting the stage for more powerful civil rights demonstrations.  

There was no dialogue between the races as white leaders refused to discuss the situations with blacks. Tension mounted throughout the South with black leaders looking
for ways to improve conditions. These early bus boycotts, beginning with Montgomery, Alabama in 1955, were learning experiences for developing new leaders, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and their knowledge and lessons learned would soon spread.29

During this same period, on September 24, 1957, President Eisenhower sent the 101st Airborne to enforce desegregation of Little Rock, Arkansas schools. Nothing had been done in South Carolina, however, and St. Anne’s remained the only integrated school in the state. Public attitudes were awakening. When the Rock Hill Herald asked for reactions on President Eisenhower’s move, the results were mixed. Although the majority responding believed that America was founded on democratic principles, they felt that equal opportunity would take time. Some stated they did not believe blacks wanted to mix but merely wanted to secure their rights as U.S. citizens. All interviewed refused to give their names.30

There was a setback in the community when, in October 1958, St. Philip’s Hospital closed and the last patient, Maria Crockett, was moved to Divine Saviour in York. Crockett had never recovered from eye surgery at the hospital which rendered her blind. She had nowhere to turn. The sisters did not hesitate to reach out and help. They allowed her to live at the hospital for years, caring for her physical needs until her death at Divine Saviour. Crockett was Catholic and nonwhite and the priests administered her spiritual needs, enlisting the aid of the Young Men’s Club to assist her at mass. The Sisters of St. Francis had operated St. Philip’s at 120% of bed capacity and despite efforts

30. “Area Residents’ Reactions to Ike’s Moves are mixed,” Evening Herald, September 24, 1957.
by the local community, could not furnish funds to build a new hospital. It was described as "efficient but ancient."\textsuperscript{31}

Jim Crow thrived, and it was not until the 1960's that a series of events occurred that would change the course of history in the South. Schools remained segregated, separate, and unequal. Dual public facilities continued to be the norm, and South Carolina remained bound by white supremacist attitudes and politicians. Minorities were demanding rights. Protests, demonstrations, and an era of turbulence began as leaders emerged and led the cause, seeking a death to Jim Crow and a better life for the oppressed.

\textsuperscript{31} "Allotment Fund Change Asked To Save Rock Hill Hospital," \textit{The State}, August 1, 1958, accessed December 1, 2015; "St. Philip's Hospital Will Be Torn Down," \textit{Evening Herald}, July 8, 1960, accessed December 1, 2015. News articles also address Maria Crockett as well as statements by the following: Boone interview November 10, 2015; Walton interview, Rock Hill, November 12, 2015. Crockett was nonwhite and it was believed she was of Hispanic culture.
Chapter Four: The Turbulent Sixties

When we allow freedom to ring—when we let it ring from every city and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, “Free at last, Free at last, Great God a-mighty, we are free at last.”

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I have a dream...

By the early 1960’s, times had not changed very much in Rock Hill’s Carroll Park area, and St. Mary’s continued its very personal relationship with the black community. Nuns, known as the “Belles of St. Mary’s,” still went door to door doing whatever necessary to make the community a better place. They were making sure everyone was doing all right by familiarizing people with governmental services, contacting medical personnel for help, waking up the children who did not show up for school, and sometimes just chatting. Meanwhile, the priests and brothers gave paternal care to their flocks and there were strong ongoing personal relationships.¹

Henry Walton, a longtime parishioner at St. Mary’s, related his wedding story. He and his wife married outside of the church because she was not Catholic at the time. Fr. Tevlin paid them a visit one evening after word had gotten to him of this event. Walton was embarrassed that he had not discussed his plans with Tevlin, who immediately marched them over to the church and performed another ceremony. Walton remembered this occasion and the crackers and Coca Cola Tevlin purchased for them from the

¹. “Our Colored Missions,” Educating in Faith, June 1968, 14-20, references the designation as the “Belles of St. Mary’s” and their contributions to their mission.
vending machine for their wedding banquet. He remembered this as one of his fondest memories of Tevlin who was such a positive influence in the community.\textsuperscript{2} The bond between the Catholic Church and the community was so strong that the church quite naturally became more deeply involved in the larger world of the civil rights movement as well. The principles of Christianity, equality, and opportunity were at stake and the Oratorians were at the forefront of the struggle.

\textit{The Growth of Civil Rights Organizations}

During the 1960's, there were four organizations that became the skeletal structure for the civil right movement. These were the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). They all adopted the technique of nonviolent direct protest, from CORE, the oldest of the four organizations. CORE had developed its philosophy in the 1940's. Direct action involved housing, employment, education, and rights. James Farmer who became CORE's National Director, John Lewis who helped found SNCC, and Thomas Gaither from CORE, were three of the most influential and charismatic in the Rock Hill movement. The principles promoted were based upon Mahatma Gandhi's belief in love and nonviolence. Nevertheless, there was a great deal bickering between the various groups during the civil rights era of the 1960's. The issues ranged to taking credit for a particular cause, active participation, and the lack

\textsuperscript{2} Walton, interview.
of group aggressiveness. The groups differed in their methods of approach in order to accomplish their same goals.

The difference in approach between Gandhi and King, for example, other than time and place, was one of implementation. Gandhi urged his followers to disobey the laws of the British Colonial government, whereas King believed that “there are just laws and unjust laws,” but did not support breaking either one. St. Augustine said, “An unjust law is no law at all,” and King agreed. King advocated “meeting physical force with soul force” through nonviolence, not hate. To do nothing at all, was not the agenda. This is what King preached and what the Catholic Church believed. The Oratorians worked directly and indirectly in their efforts to help the community. They employed the nonviolent philosophy, love, working with other faiths, individuals, associations, and community groups, as well as with the aforementioned organizations.

**Sit-ins, Marches, the Friendship Nine, and “Jail, No Bail”**

On February 1, 1960, the first demonstration involving seating at a public lunch counter occurred in Greensboro, North Carolina, when black students from the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College refused to leave the Woolworth’s counter when asked. With this, a movement began throughout the South. It led to the “Jail, No Bail” technique used by the Friendship Nine in Rock Hill, South Carolina the following


year. Both CORE and the NAACP had sent representatives to establish sympathetic support for the nonviolent direct action demonstrations. In Rock Hill, they were initially focused on marching downtown. There were sit-ins, arrests, and bail posted. Most participants were the students from Friendship Junior College where a chapter of CORE had been established. The college was a black school formed by Baptists in 1891. There was also an adult group whose function was to raise money to cover bonds or legal expenses should this be warranted.\(^6\)

The Oratorians worked closely with the civil rights organizations and the Friendship students. In Rock Hill, Br. David Boone led the cause through the Catholic Church. He was white, an Oratorian, nonviolent, and a transformational leader. Boone collaborated closely with the Rev. Ivory of the Hermon Presbyterian Church, until Ivory’s death in 1961. Ivory was often jailed, even though he was permanently disabled and in a wheelchair. For protection, Ivory carried a heavy cane across his lap, and stored a shotgun behind his door, because death threats had been common since his involvement in the 1957 bus boycott. Boone carried no weapons. Both Boone and Ivory repeatedly told the students to keep their focus, not to lose their tempers, and to make wise decisions.\(^7\)

When the marching started, the groups of marchers were organized into an average of about thirty to forty in each unit. Many came up through the ranks of the


young men's or women's' clubs in the St. Mary's recreation center, or were current members, and at one time had attended Emmett Scott High School. The young people marched with signs from Friendship College to downtown and back in these small groups and picketed the drug and variety stores. The signs bore the statements “Integrate the Lunch Counters” or “Jim Crow Must Go.” In addition to being on the sidelines, Boone was well aware of all of the activities and behaviors of the participants, as he was also a member of the Minister’s Association of the NAACP. The philosophy that nonviolence was the answer was continually put to the test. The students were trained to know that if they exhibited a temper, they were not part of the movement.  

There were numerous sit-ins, such as the incident involving one hundred students at McCrory’s lunch counter on February 12, 1960, led by Friendship College student Leroy Johnson. To combat these protests, a White Citizens Council formed four days later, with an initial membership of 350. The marching and sit-ins continued throughout 1960, but in Rock Hill failed to end segregation, and there was violence as often protesters were attacked with ammonia bombs. The only achievement was making the city richer. By 1961, approximately $17,000 in bail money had been collected.  

Boone stated that the Oratorians agreed the South was long overdue for change. Most of the men in the Oratory came from the integrated North and they could not

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8. Boone interview, September 1, 2015; Felder, Civil Rights in South Carolina, 100; Text of signs from Hildebrand, Rock Hill Reflections, 74.

condone southern Jim Crow Laws. Cities were now funding their own interests with bail dollars being paid by parents. A new approach was needed and students at Friendship College took the lead. Dr. J. H. Goudlock, President of Friendship, was strongly behind the civil rights movement and also a member of the RHCHR. There was no involvement by Clinton Junior College which was located on Crawford Road approximately one half of a mile from St. Mary’s. Boone stated that the president of the small black A.M.E. Zion College, Dr. S. V. Moreland, ruled very strongly and would not allow students to demonstrate.\textsuperscript{10}

The students were ready to make a change, and the tactic of the "jail-in" moved to the Ghandian “Jail, No Bail” strategy. On January 31, 1961, students from Friendship Junior College in Rock Hill made their move. During the summer of 1960, Thomas Gaither had become dissatisfied with the lack of participation by many South Carolina college students. He believed that the No Bail philosophy would cause a sense of moral consciousness for the whites and also stimulate black participation. He started to recruit for the finale which would result in the historic Rock Hill sit-in, that elevated the participants to the iconic Friendship Nine.\textsuperscript{11} With the exception of Thomas Gaither, who was a CORE field secretary, the Friendship Nine attended the all black Emmett Scott School and graduated in 1959 or 1960, and were now attending Friendship Junior College. The men of the Nine are: John Gaines, Thomas Gaither, Clarence Graham, Willie T. “Dub” Massey, Robert McCullough, Willie McCleod, James Wells, David

\textsuperscript{10} Boone interview, September 1, 2015

\textsuperscript{11} Meier and Rudwick, \textit{Core A Study}, 117-118.
Williamson, and Mack Cartier Workman. The tenth participant, Charles E. Taylor, chose bail as he did not want to lose his athletic scholarship at the college. He is, therefore, not included in the designation of the “Friendship Nine.”

W. T. "Dub" Massey, related in a 1981 personal interview, that this initially started when the students at the college did not like the food being served in the Friendship cafeteria. Many initially started going down to the Black Street area in Rock Hill where most of the black businesses were located. Once they tired of the food, they chose to go somewhere else and order a hamburger. Massey related, at age eighteen he just did not understand why they could not get a bite to eat elsewhere. He had no intentions of joining a protest or marching, was very reluctant, and was the last to join. Massey got involved when the students were repeatedly rebuked. There were four establishments that had counter food service: F. W. Woolworth Company, J. D. McCrory Company, Good's Drug Store, and Phillip's Drug Store. The students would go to the various places and when asked to leave would readily depart from the premises.

In order to prepare for this venture into gaining rights, the students participated in one hour training sessions following the SNCC model. In the training, the men were subjected to slapping, verbal abuse, spitting in their faces, and asked to visualize what

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they would do if a gun was held to their heads. Their responses were to be nonviolent and they were told to say, for example, "Sir, I'd like to order a hamburger." The group circulated from lunch counter to lunch counter until about mid-January with no results. Massey stated, however, that he will never forget when he was seated at the lunch counter at Good's Drug Store. The owner approached Massey and told him to move or he would be "blown away." Since this occurred before the training, Massey already knew what it was really like to have a gun put to your head. The plan and training progressed and the students readied for their trial of not leaving when asked, maintaining nonviolence. Boone continually stressed “turn the other cheek” and counseled the men to adopt that posture. He was there on the scenes with them, the only white person. Since he was white and wore a collar designating him as clergy, he was never arrested and the newspapers made no mention of him.

Gaither recalled in later years that as he headed to downtown with the students, they all wondered whether any would back out. Parents worried for their children’s safety, losing their own jobs, and how it would affect their own and the students’ futures. Boone stated that the parents were told to stay away and pay no bail. Clarence Graham wrote a letter to his parents the day before the event telling them of the plan and why he was participating. He knew they would be upset and he did not know how to tell them. Graham stated that he wanted to make the world a better place for blacks. As expected,


his father who worked as a press operator for the Herald, was told to curb his son. No one, however, had backed out.  

According to plan, nine students and Gaither were to go into McCrory’s, in downtown Rock Hill, and sit at the lunch counter while nine just marched along the street. There were approximately an additional twenty to thirty supporters, male and female, who remained outdoors. The only whites that were present were those who came to taunt. They were refused service and told to leave but did not, were arrested, and thrown into jail. Willie McLeod asserted that the most frightening thing which brought home the magnitude of the event, is when he heard the cell door slam shut and lock. The choice was to pay a $100 fine or spend thirty days in jail. Nine chose the Jail, No Bail strategy. The students were placed on the chain gang cleaning ditches, clearing underbrush, and building manholes. They would move rock piles into the road back and forth.  

The Friendship Nine stated they would sing freedom songs and spirituals, while they slept on the bare metal bunks. Prison issued dress of used shoes, bib overalls, and a t-shirt were the clothing given to each man. The guards were very upset at them and put them all in one solitary confinement cell which measured 12’ x 12’, and they were given bread and water. This did not last long because it did not break their spirits. As the

group protested the work they were given, they went on a hunger strike. The students were then reassigned to the road gang so there would be no "adverse publicity." McLeod stated they worked to the rhythm of the popular Sam Cook song, *The Chain Gang.*

Four students, two male and two female, from various universities outside of Rock Hill joined the protest. Sanctioned by SNCC, they came to Rock Hill, sat in at a lunch counter and quickly arrested, sentenced, and jailed. They, like the Friendship Nine, received thirty-days of hard labor. SNCC then called for more volunteers, and a busload of Nashville A&I students arrived and picketed. This gave rise to other sit-ins throughout the South over a period of years, some of which turned violent, such as the Orangeburg Massacre.

On the first Sunday after the arrest, Boone joined a caravan to visit those in jail. The jail was roped off and even the citizenry secured their own properties, so there was no parking available. A few elderly were allowed to be dropped off at the facility as long as the caravan kept moving. The group eventually found parking at the White Hill AME Church on SC-161 in York, and walked back to the prison which is located on SC-5 in York, a distance of 1.7 miles. People jeered all along the way and there was little police protection. By the time the visitors arrived, visiting hours had ended. The following Sunday there was a lockdown because one prisoner was ill and in the infirmary. The next

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19. Cobb, Jr, *On the Road to Freedom,* 141-142. The students were: Diane Nash, Ruby Doris Smith, Chales Sherrod, and Charles Jones. The women served their time at the York County Women’s Detention Center. The Orangeburg Massacre erupted on February 8, 1968.
week, no one went, and they were released at the end of thirty days. The students had missed one month of schooling.  

The adult black community in Rock Hill suddenly awakened and as student participation grew, became astutely aware of the students’ resiliency and enduring dedication to the cause. They realized that the nonviolent movement was not just a local concern for only blacks. It was a united crusade for everyone believing in equality. As a result, many adults offered direction to the students for future demonstrations. Nonetheless, few took direct action alongside them because of possible consequences, especially if the demonstrations failed. Many boycotted businesses, but few joined the picketing or sit-ins.  

SNCC came back to support the groups, and there was a brief period of kneel-ins in which persons knelt in front of various discriminating churches on Sunday mornings. On February 17, nineteen black students from Friendship College picketed Winthrop College (now Winthrop University). They had been denied admission to Winthrop and were now arrested for trespassing and thirteen were given thirty-day sentences. On March 10, Farmer came back to Rock Hill and urged non-violence once again. On May 15, the Evening Herald reported, on its front page, that two women from Friendship had applied to Winthrop, but they were not admitted as their applications were considered incomplete. In late October, Winthrop’s Board advised the trustees that it was not their

20. Boone interviews, September 1, 2015, November 10, 2015, and February 12, 2016; Google Maps indicates the distance from White Hill AME to the York County Detention Center is 1.7 miles.  

place to remove the charter clause establishing the school for white women. An article in the university newspaper, *The Johnsonian*, asserted that the people were acting “like ostriches” when they ignored the U.S. Supreme Court. There were no major immediate advances for blacks as a result of these events, but the entire community became cognizant of the forthcoming changes. After the event, some of the Friendship Nine joined the army, while others went back to school, or transferred to four year colleges.22

After the nine left the area, the ministers and priests had to continue the long fight for rights. The pressure was on for five to ten years and anyone who participated in the struggle received threats. Boone received numerous hate letters and phone calls. The Oratory screened all of his phone calls and mail so he remains unaware of the actual volume. When one of the local Klan members went to Washington to testify on Klan activity, he stated that Boone "was the most hated white person in South Carolina."

Fortunately, Boone never suffered from extreme violence because the Oratory was a safe haven secured by the number of men residing there. Further, whites were still reluctant to come into the Carroll Park/Crawford Road area where St. Mary’s was located. He recalled, however, people stopping their vehicles, getting out, taking pictures, and then leaving. It was not until 2015 that the Friendship Nine were vindicated, after almost 54 years; their convictions were overturned and Boone was recognized for his efforts.23

22. Meier and Redwick, *Core A Study*, refer to the kneel-ins which appear to have had no impact upon the community; The following provides information on Winthrop College: Ross A. Webb, *The Torch is Passed: A History of Winthrop University* (Mansfield: BookMasters Inc., 2002), 186; Boone interview September 1, 2015 referred to the finality of the Nine and their futures.

23. Boone interview, September 1, 2015; The historic vindication occurred on January 28, 2015. Circuit Court Judge John C. Hayes III, vacated the charge of trespassing on all ten men. Kevin Brackett, speaking for the justice system, apologized to them. The Friendship Nine were represented by their original attorney, Ernest A. Finney, Jr.
Boone said his mother, who lived in Kentucky, would say to him in their phone conversations that she was so happy he was safe in South Carolina and did not have to deal with all of the violence in Alabama and Mississippi. He stated that she never knew his role in civil rights.²⁴

*Freedom Riders on the Journey of Reconciliation*

When the freedom riders came to Rock Hill in 1961 for the “Journey of Reconciliation,” there was violence. The original journey, in 1947, was sponsored by CORE. An interracial group travelled to twenty-six southern cities on Greyhound Buses, to test the traditional seating of blacks in the rear of buses. The 1947 journey, despite failure, was a role model being attempted fourteen years later. In December, 1960 the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled that segregation on interstate transport was unconstitutional in *Boynton v. Virginia*, (1960). It further ruled segregation illegal in terminal facilities as well as on buses and trains. CORE took the lead, once again, to test the new ruling. It set up the program to focus on the Deep South, its facilities at terminals, and would implement the Jail, No Bail program if there were arrests. John Lewis, a seminary student and civil rights activist from Georgia, joined the “Journey of Reconciliation.”²⁵

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²⁴ Boone interview, April 27, 2016.

The idea was to recruit twelve to fourteen volunteers, train them intensively in Washington, D.C., and start the ride. It would begin on May 4, 1961 and end on the seventh anniversary of the Brown decision on May 17 in New Orleans. A strong commitment to nonviolence was necessary and everyone had to be aware of the dangers. All had to expect to be arrested and harassed. There was a racial mix and age range from eighteen to twenty-nine (discounting the oldest, Farmer). Women were limited because of the expected dangers. Each applicant had to write an essay expressing their reasons for joining, and submitted a letter of recommendation from a teacher or pastor. Permission was necessary for anyone under the age of twenty-one. Although there were three journalists accompanying the group, there was little fanfare.²⁶

Letters had been written to President John F. Kennedy, Director J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), and the presidents of Greyhound and Trailways. There was not a single response. When they boarded the buses there was to be a designated "aloof" observer and a person who would avoid arrest so he or she could inform CORE. All participants dressed well: the women wore dresses and heels and the men were attired in suits and ties. All brought overnight bags with toiletry supplies in anticipation of arrest. Foremost, they were warned of a high level of Klan activities in the city of Rock Hill.²⁷ The idea was to cause the federal government to step in and defend constitutional rights. All were aware of the


²⁷. Ibid.
dangers and that, with strong resistance, there was always the possibility of injury and even death.  

Thomas Gaither made an early trip along the route to set up assistance from the NAACP, arrange rallies, and set up overnight accommodations because the riders traveled only by day. They split into two groups, with one riding Greyhound and the other on Trailways. SNCC stepped in and assisted when CORE was about to abandon the cause because of violence. The riders went throughout the South, starting in Washington, D.C. By custom in the South, whites were seated in the front and blacks the rear. However, the riders reversed the practice and also tested federal law by focusing on the use of facilities which were traditionally for whites only, at bus stations. The riders would get off the bus and then order a meal at the lunch facility. If an altercation ensued, they were to apply the Jail, No Bail philosophy.

The Oratorians and community members were to meet them at the station. In the days before cell phones and portable communication, plans often did not work out perfectly. The bus was four to five hours late so the greeters went home. When the bus finally arrived, there were whites waiting in vehicles and the riders were beaten. Lewis and his seat mate, Albert Bigelow, approached the white waiting area when a white youth pointed to the “colored” room and began shouting at the men. Lewis explained their rights under the Boynton case, but the men were suddenly stuck. Neither fought back.

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Lewis had bruised ribs, cuts on his face, and required medical attention, which he refused. One sympathetic officer asked if they wanted to press charges, but they declined. Lewis, Albert Bigelow, and Genevieve Hughes were escorted to the restaurant and Lewis later stated he drank his "hard-earned cup of coffee." Someone from Friendship College brought a first aid kit. The riders believed they had passed their first test of passive resistance.31

When the Trailways bus arrived later that day, conflict was diverted. The terminal was locked and the restaurant had been closed for weeks after the Friendship Nine sit-in. They were greeted by well-wishers who warned them of the crowd across the street. The Rev. Ivory was on the scene, put them in waiting vehicles amid shouts and obscene gestures, and they were transported to Friendship Junior College. Later that evening, both groups met at Ivory's home. Both Boone and Ivory continued to receive threats. The following morning the riders, less Lewis who flew to Philadelphia, desegregated the waiting rooms in both bus terminals, and there were no incidents.32

There was little publicity because civil rights events were overshadowed as headlines still announced the first U.S. sponsored manned orbital space flight of Alan Shepard on May 5, 1961. There was speculation why only one group was attacked. Prior to their arrival, the stools were removed from the lunch counter at Greyhound and the Trailways station closed its counter early. When the police arrived and asked the


riders if they wanted to press charges, they stated no. Lewis stated that they were keeping with the focus of nonviolence and the goal of desegregation in accommodations and transportation. Officer J. M. Hunsucker of the Rock Hill police stated he did not think this was Klan controlled, but the group certainly was organized. Although the newspapers reported that this was not KKK related, in 2009 Elwin Wilson, a member and spokesperson for the Rock Hill KKK publicly acknowledged the Klan’s involvement and apologized to Georgia Congressmen John Lewis. Lewis became involved in politics and has been in office continuously since 1986.

**Voting**

Even though the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution (1870), banned states from disenfranchising any male citizen “on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude,” the struggle to actually vote continued for over one hundred years to allow voting to become a reality for all citizens. Former Confederate states took advantage of the provision that they could institute additional qualifications, such as literacy tests and poll taxes, which would apply equally to all.

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34. “Ex-KKK Apologizes to Representative John Lewis,” *YouTube*, February 8, 2009. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiPTU_S4MH1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiPTU_S4MH1); In Boone interview of February 12, 2016, Boone stated that Wilson was a known influential Klan member.

35. U.S. Senate, 2016. “The Civil War: The Senate’s Story.” Accessed April 1, 2016. [www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/CivilWarAmendments.htm](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/CivilWarAmendments.htm); Women were not given the right to vote until the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920.
In 1960, Boone and the Rev. Robert G. Toatley, who later became Pastor of Hermon Presbyterian, co-chaired a committee to sponsor voter registration in conjunction with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), or Quakers, who had come to Rock Hill to promote the vote. He and Boone had worked together on community projects for some time, since Toatley’s residence was virtually next door to St. Mary’s Church. Most of the residents in the Carroll Park area worked during the day and they were unavailable until evening. Boone requested that registration be kept open later to enable working parents to register. Many did not vote because at this time, if black persons came alone, they would usually be deterred from registering.  

Literacy tests were the most widely used tools for disenfranchisement, and were difficult and almost impossible to pass. Tests required that “a registrant must be able to read and write any section of the state constitution.” Another method used to discourage minorities from voting occurred when groups banned together and came to register, only to find that one or two persons would be allowed to register and the rest of the group would be told that the registration books were closed for the day. Shortly thereafter, those who had successfully registered would ask that their names be removed from the books, after being informed by their employers they would be fired or face bodily harm.  

In Rock Hill, people said they would go to register only if there were clergy accompanying them. So they went, with the registrations remaining open until 9 p.m.

Registration continued throughout the evening, without the mandatory testing for black citizens. When registration closed, there were still eighty people in line. Boone felt that the registrars thought the clergy were Federal Agents. There was never an evening registration open again in Rock Hill. However, the Southern Regional Council Voter Education Project continued to assist and promote voter registration, and people went to the polls and voted without fear. Boone, Tevlin, and Wahl continued to work with the ministers of various Rock Hill churches through the RHCHR.

It was not until the Voting Rights Act was signed on August 6, 1965 and federal agents came into the South to enforce it, that literacy tests were abolished. When the bill was enacted, there was not one Carolina senator that voted yes for its passage.

Sports and Recreation

In 1959, the public schools were still segregated, and St. Anne’s remained the only integrated school in South Carolina. Emmett Scott High School, across the street from St. Mary’s, was the only high school for blacks. Youth congregated at St. Mary’s because this was the only facility with basketball courts, which had been installed in 1953. In 1959, Boone was permanently assigned to administer the recreation program at St. Mary’s. The program was to become the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). It was based out of De Porres Recreation Center which is now Bannon Hall. The boys played

38. Boone interview, September 1, 2015.


baseball, and whenever they played, Boone was always on the field. The black teams had the best players and everyone got along well as they all grew up in this same community and usually had been acquainted since childhood. However, there was segregation and the boys only competed with teams of the same color. There was a black league and a white league. Boone began administering this program in addition to his normal duties at St. Mary’s that consisted of cutting grass, providing maintenance services, assisting in pastoral church duties, counseling, and fighting for civil rights.41

From the time of his appointment in 1959, Boone attempted to integrate his teams into the Rock Hill leagues, but was unsuccessful until 1965. Early on he enlisted the help of Richard Hemphill, a member of the community but not St. Mary’s, who would work with him for approximately twenty-five years. Together they managed both the male and newly-established female teams. The teams were so successful that they accumulated a room full of trophies at St. Mary’s, some as tall as the athletes themselves.42

It was not until 1965 that things changed, when Boone again went to the Parks and Recreation Department to try and get approval to compete with the white softball teams. The timing was opportune because there were many changes with the passage of the 1964 and 1965 Civil Rights Acts. Luther Glen, the Parks and Recreation Director,

41. Boone interviews, September 1, 2015, and December 15, 2015.

42. Boone interviews, September 1, 2015, and December 15, 2015; Ellis interview, November 13, 2015.
gave his own approval and invited Boone to a meeting of managers for the white teams the following week.\textsuperscript{43}

At the meeting there were eight to ten persons in attendance. Boone immediately came to the point and stated, “I’m here to put an all-black team in the league.” He didn’t know what to expect, and stated “there was a dead silence, and you could hear a pin drop.” After several minutes of silence, which appeared to be an eternity, Ike Robeson, who managed the most successful white team, spoke up and gave his approval. He stated that they welcomed the competition. Arguments followed, but the board gave its approval and the first game was played at Oakwood Acres.\textsuperscript{44}

This mixing of teams was so successful that Buddy MacArthur who played on Ike Robeson’s team, asked if the blacks could practice with them; and they did several times. St. Mary’s team was third out of ten to twelve teams in their first season in the league. The following year they excelled and continued winning. This was a major accomplishment. When there were games, the teams would play and then leave. There was no entering locker rooms to shower or chat. When Boone transported the boys back to their homes, he kept his windows rolled up because there was high public discontent. In 1965 Boone also integrated the YMCA basketball league. Now sports were wide open for male participation of all races. However, change was slower for women in sports involvement. It was not until 1972 that the St. Mary’s girls joined the all-white Women’s

\textsuperscript{43} Boone interviews, September 1, 2015, and December 15, 2015.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
softball league. It took several years, however, until there was universal public acceptance that this was the way of the future.45

In 1968, Boone again went to the City Council asking for another softball field. He left the meeting as a member on the Board of the Rock Hill Parks and Recreation Committee. Mayor, David Lyle, made the recommendation and Boone was quickly voted into office. He readily accepted the nomination then and continues to be re-appointed, every three years. He is currently the chairman of the committee through January 2017. The request for the additional field was passed unanimously.46

Civil Rights Bills Enacted

It was not until 1964 and 1965 when President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights bills, and change was noticeable. Boone stated that this legislation slowed the migration of youth travelling to the North after high school. Many came back after 1965 when the U.S. Government demanded equal rights for all workers in textile mills engaged in supplying military uniforms. If the mills did not abide, the mills lost their grants. Now all races could find decent jobs in the many factories, work side by side, attain college educations, and reach higher goals.47

45. Boone interviews, September 1 and December 15, 2015; Proclamation for David Boone Day, April 20, 2009 by Mayor Doug Echols cites YMCA integration of leagues; Common Sense, Fall 1977, St. Mary Church Archives advises of women’s participation in sports.


Annexation and Utilities

In 1966, urban renewal began under President Johnson’s Model Cities Act. Rock Hill concluded that one half of the city’s homes were substandard. The city applied for funding with a comprehensive plan and obtained approximately $55,000,000 in federal funds. In addition to building a new city hall and library, the city touted its annexation of two black neighborhoods and 700 low income housing units. This took several years but there was involvement from the whole city. There were block clubs which provided social get-togethers, neighborhood clean-ups, and a chance to discuss needed improvements. Tevlin was treasurer of the Go-Getter Club which met at St. Mary’s. 48

Well into the 1960’s many of the side streets and adjoining areas to the central black community near downtown were not in the actual City of Rock Hill. They were in York County, so there were no city services such as water, sewers, street lights, and garbage collection. Little had changed since World War II and outhouses were still in use. To install utilities would also be a difficult task because of the rocky terrain. However, in 1968 petitions were presented to the City Council for annexation into the city. St. Mary’s was fortunate to have built Bannon Hall, which served as a meeting center for various community organizations. Boone enlisted the aid of the Young Men’s and Women’s Clubs and went door-to-door to collect signatures for the Crawford Road area close to St. Mary’s and the all-black Clinton College. In addition, other petitions were presented by three other community groups. Each petition had to contain at least seventy-five percent of the homeowners. The problem they faced was that most persons

rented and were subject to their absentee landlords residing out of state. However, the groups were highly successful. Boone stated his group had only two homeowners, referred to as freeholders in the petitions, who did not sign even though the federal grants became available without charge to the owners. The petitions were presented over a matter of months and readily passed the council and third reading as required. The city immediately responded with trash pickups, but water and sewer took some time because of the rocky terrain in Rock Hill. In the meantime, people were still forced to use outhouses, but the areas soon become annexed and received city services.49

Chapter Five: The Bridge from the 1970’s to the Future

School Integration: Slowly but Surely

Societal change was slow in both the public and private sectors. Although St. Anne’s integrated in 1954, it was not until 1963 that Bishop Reh announced that all schools in the Diocese of Charleston would admit blacks for the 1964-65 terms.\(^1\) It was also in 1964 that Rock Hill High School witnessed token integration with seven black students, but not until 1970 that the first student graduated. Of the seven, some chose to go back to Emmett Scott High School. Alvin “Tommy” Murdock was one of those who returned. He was one black in a class of thirty, isolated and lonely. The students were routinely subjected to racial slurs and separated from their friends.\(^2\)

At the college level in 1964, Rock Hill’s Winthrop College also admitted its first black student. It was not until 1972 that males were admitted on a limited basis. Consequently, at this time, Winthrop was still an entirely white female institution. Cynthia Plair Roddey was admitted and began the graduate program in July 1964. She was followed by two other black women who enrolled as undergraduates that fall. Although there were no major incidents and Roddey was initially afforded police protection on campus, Roddey experienced the same insolation Murdock had witnessed at Rock Hill High. She asserted that during her three year study at Winthrop she had only two persons on campus to whom she could talk. Despite this, Roddey graduated with

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1. Madden, Catholics in South Carolina, 356.

high honors. To ensure success for all, the black ministers’ of the NAACP, along with the Catholic Church, also assisted in the necessary funding for one of the Winthrop undergraduates whose family could not meet the tuition payments.³

*The New York Times* reported in its September 24, 1967 edition that the previous year had been the first during which districts were threatened with loss of federal funds if they did not comply with integration guidelines. There was only 16.8 percent integration in the South at that time. To meet the guideline of faculty integration, the transfer of one librarian often met the requirement. Now, the government was pressing for an average of two and some local districts stated that teachers were unwilling to relocate. Peter Libassi, Director of the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, believed integration was slowing down in the South and teachers stated that they would move only if instructed by the Superintendent.⁴ Another ploy eliminated black teachers and principals in the early 1960's. When pushed, schools were integrated and blacks were slowly “eased” from their jobs. By the mid 1960's, there was a close to a one-on-one relationship between the desegregated schools and black principals being eliminated from the systems. Districts did not outright fire them, but demoted them to counseling, teaching, or maintenance work.⁵

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³ Boone interview, November 10, 2015. The Black Ministers Association was for black Christian ministers only. Boone, however, was a member of the NAACP since the late 1950’s; Webb, *A Torch is Passed*, 186; Assignment for protection for Roddey was Melvin Roseboro, interview by author, Rock Hill, November 17, 2015.


A March 15, 1970 article in *The State*, reprinted the opinions of the *New York Times* News Service, and reported that during the 1969-70 academic year, 40 to 45% of blacks in the South were attending school with whites. This was double from the prior year. However, there was strong resistance from organized protests in metropolitan areas, such as Charlotte, North Carolina. Protests replaced the violence of the 1960’s, although there were isolated incidents that were widely publicized, such as buses being overturned in South Carolina. The *Times* accused some Southern politicians of using exaggerated statistics, for example, in busing. Some areas in the South would not comply, but in South Carolina an additional twenty districts said they would fully comply by 1970-71.  

In 1970, President Nixon announced desegregation would be left to the courts, and in that year Emmett Scott was shut down. The Nixon administration was not pressing any litigation against noncompliant districts and routinely granted delays. However, the Supreme Court decided it was time to start implementing changes and upheld *Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education* (1969). This ended the era when “all deliberate speed” was ignored and dual systems were to be terminated at once.  

Rock Hill promptly adhered to the court ruling and when Emmett Scott closed its doors in 1970, students were transferred to Rock Hill High School. In 1971, Northwestern High School was opened, and since it was new to the entire community, there were no major problems. However, at Rock Hill High School it was a different

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situation when more blacks were admitted and racial tensions sky-rocketed. Black students felt they were second class citizens and excluded from student activities, ranging from the school government to some athletic teams. Discontent grew until it culminated in the winter-spring of 1971-72. During an assembly, seven students refused to stand for the national anthem and Rock Hill High’s alma mater and were expelled. Embers ignited when Dixie was rehearsed at band practice and the students told that if they did not wish to participate, they should leave.\(^8\)

On January 26, 1972, approximately 200 black students walked out of the school, which at the time was located near Cherry Park and Eden Terrace Road. They marched to Bannon Hall at St. Mary’s, and consulted with Boone. The distance was a little over four miles. Boone asked for a meeting with Superintendent of Schools Jeff Savage, and was refused. Boone was unsure where he could turn and called Alma Mills. Mills was a good friend who worked at Friendship College. Alma suggested that he call the school board directly. He reached Wes Boone (no relation to David Boone), who was on the board, and advised him there were about eighty students with him at the time. He asked if Wes could come down to the hall and speak with them. No one would accompany him, so Wes Boone showed up alone.\(^9\)

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8. Boone interview, September 1, 2015; Leroy Ervin letter to U.S. Office of Civil Rights, February 2, 1972, St. Mary Church Archives. A student advisory group was formed with help from Oratorians and former St. Mary’s Men’s and Women’s Club members and a subsequent letter drafted asking for assistance.

Br. David and the students presented a list of grievances and passed them along to Savage. However, Savage overrode Wes Boone and stated that the grievances had to be presented in the normal procedure to the student body in February. The students returned to school the next day and attempted to meet with Principal Calvin Burleson who called the police and suspended them for three days. In the meantime, all of the involved students continued to board the segregated buses every morning, arrive but not enter school, and walk the four miles back to Bannon Hall. This continued for ten school days during which the city merchants were reacting. They did not want black youths walking downtown during the day because it affected their businesses and they demanded the city do something. Parents also were concerned because school was operated on a limited basis wherein students came to school on separate days: freshmen and sophomores would not attend the same days as juniors and seniors.10

Savage reluctantly met with the students on February 5. He would not overturn expulsions and turned a deaf ear to grievances. The students did not give up. Br. David pleaded with the students that they refrain from protests and go again to the school board. In the interim, the students also sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare’s Office of Civil Rights (HEW). Fr. Joseph Wahl and Br. David worked with the students to compile a list of demands. Twenty-one demands were brought up and then narrowed down to seven for presentation to the board. Some of the demands were: more black studies and black teachers, suspensions to be expunged off the record,

and the school colors be mixed with the former Emmett Scott colors. The students presented their grievances and returned to school. The board deliberated over several weeks, but only part of the grievances were settled. Consequently, the students were unhappy with the decisions, and tensions escalated, and tempers flared.\textsuperscript{11}

By March 2, the students, feeling insulted and angry, attempted to reach out once again, since few demands were met. As a result, 180 students approached Savage directly in his office. A huge part of the demand was the students’ strong feelings towards the addition of Emmett Scott’s colors. The board had thus far ruled only to add a gold stripe on some athletic uniforms. Tempers escalated and no acceptable decisions reached between the students and Savage. The students left the office and afterwards the school reported damage to some school windows and street lights. As a result, the 180 were suspended for three days. Boone believed the board missed the point of the issue, keeping something of Emmett Scott and its significance for the black community.\textsuperscript{12}

The school returned to a normal schedule later in March. The school rendered its final decisions. A bus would take the students to school and after school it would drop them off on their respective corners near their homes, suspensions would be dropped, more black teachers would be hired, and something gold would be added to the school colors.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} Boone interviews, September 1, 2015 and October 14, 2016; Leroy Ervin letter to U.S. Office of Civil Rights, HEW.

\textsuperscript{12} Boone interview, September 1, 2015.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
Jim Avery participated in the walk-out and continues to believe strongly that school colors were one of the main issues. Students from Emmett Scott wanted something from their former school remembered and school colors were a good way to do it. The students had tolerated the racial insults and blatant intimidation on a daily basis and something needed to change.\textsuperscript{14} In 1972, gold was added to the school colors of garnet and black to represent Emmett Scott.\textsuperscript{15} After Rock Hill High School went back to normal schedules, no other major disturbances occurred. Nevertheless, after five years Rock Hill's colors reverted back to the original.\textsuperscript{16} Again, they changed, and today the colors are garnet, black, and gold.

\textit{Vatican II: The Changing Church}

Fr. Richard Wahl became the pastor of St. Mary’s in 1971. His brother, Fr. Edward Wahl, had been the catalyst for its founding in 1946. Fr. Richard realized that the community was changing, and since Emmett Scott School was now a community center, the focus was redirected from youth to the development of laity in stronger leadership positions, such as parish councils and education. Vatican II, (the Second Vatican Council), October 11, 1962 through the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 1965, addressed the role of the Catholic Church and the modern world and began this directive to shared leadership. The focus shifted to fund raising, social

\textsuperscript{14} Avery interview; Emmett Scott’s colors were blue and gold.

\textsuperscript{15} Schonberg, Herald, "100 Years of Rock Hill High School."

\textsuperscript{16} Boone interview, September 1, 2015; Avery interview.
committees, grounds and building renovations, and spiritual education committees. The Parish Council, established on September 9, 1973, replaced a Liturgy Committee established after Vatican II to define the “parish identity.”

Vatican II pressed the Church to look inward and to consider its role in the modern world. This involved changes in liturgy, which allowed masses to be celebrated in vernacular languages, instead of the traditional Latin. The council documents, sixteen in all, were extensive, but as applied to the Rock Hill Catholic community, it included more involvement and empowerment of the laity. Traditionally in Roman Catholic Churches, the priests, brothers, and nuns were the leaders. As times changed and the numbers of Catholics grew, there were fewer nuns and priests to administer religious, educational, and community needs. The Oratorians took a strong look at themselves, when Vatican II concluded in 1965, and also after attending Oratorian congresses. They recommitted themselves to service and stronger bonding with laity by praying together and using people’s gifts by sending them out to minister. This would be a shared ministry and the community and Oratorians would it develop together. Laity became empowered to perform and become trailblazers. The Oratorians believed St. Philip Neri would be proud of them.

Boone continued his life work, and by 1972 he was completely in charge of the thriving credit union. He would open the office at Bannon Hall, close it when there was a

17. The following detail this approach: Common Sense, May, 1978; Rukstelis, bRINGiT aLL bACK hOME, 72-74

ballgame, come back after the game, and often work until 10 p.m. Since most persons worked during the day, they could not access the credit union until late evening. Bannon Hall was named for Mary Bannon, who contributed $35,000 in her will after asking a Lutheran friend, who supported St. Mary’s, if she had recommendations on where to put her money. It housed the kindergarten, youth clubs, scouts, church organizations, organized sports, and the credit union. In 1978, the Crawford Federal Credit Union was happy to report it had passed the million dollar mark in loans since its inception in 1951 and currently had 300 active members having served over 1,450 people year-to-date. There were 13 volunteers serving as board and committee members. St. Mary’s continued to furnish free space and utilities.

In 1974, Fr. David Valtierra joined the Oratorians. Together with the Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine (RCD), who had been involved in the Catholic community for nineteen years, Boone, and Fr. Richard Wahl, they served St. Mary’s. Valtierra, prepared remarkable, awe-inspiring sermons, expanded the adult education program, and developed the Catholic Campus Ministry at Winthrop University (Newman Center). So strong was his sense of social justice, that Winthrop now offers a yearly scholarship in his memory. Valtierra passed away in 2010.

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19. Boone interview, November 10, 2015; Information on will of Bannon, from information in unsigned document, St. Mary Church Archives.


21. Rukstelis, 74-75; *Common Sense*, May, 1978. Newman Centers are Catholic ministry on non-Catholic university campuses; For information on scholarship see, Winthrop University, accessed April 25, 2016, http://www.winthrop.edu/cas/studentservices scholarships. The scholarship, Father David Valtierra Peace Studies Scholarship, is given to a junior or senior student with a Peace, Justice, and Conflict Resolution Studies minor, a 3.0 or greater GPA, and who completes an essay, “How I will integrate my studies in Peace, Justice, and Conflict Resolution into my future?”
In 1977, the Sisters of Christian Doctrine left and in 1979 the Trinitarians (Sisters of Most Blessed Trinity) arrived. Since 1935, six orders of sisters served the community at various times and in capacities ranging from nursing and teaching to administrative and religious parish works. Since the church dealt with aging populations of sisters and fewer women entering religious orders, there was a shortage of sisters to assist in the Rock Hill area.

In 1975, the Catholic community reached beyond Rock Hill and sponsored a Vietnamese family of twenty-one, through the parishioners at St. Anne’s. The Phan family were refugees who fled from Viet Nam and found themselves in a refugee camp in Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. They had nothing but a few personal belongings and the clothes on their backs. Fr. John Guiliani, new to the Oratory, was given the task by Fr. Joseph Wahl for finding suitable housing for the family who was scheduled to arrive in thirty days, and related the difficulty to find a willing landlord for rental. A generous parishioner offered a property in need of some repair, which was accomplished through the service of the Catholic community, the Vietnamese, and the Oratorians. Volunteers provided health care, taught English, provided major renovations to the building, and helped them assimilate into the community.

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Empowerment: Gospel Choir, Integration at St. Mary’s, Change and Growth

When Fr. John Guiliani returned to the Oratory in 1980, after his training, a team approach existed in order to more efficiently deal with the administration of the various parishes, as the Catholic Church was growing in numbers. Guiliani joined the Oratory in 1975, was sent to Washington, DC to study in 1976, and returned in 1980 when he was ordained. He would be at one parish and then another and return to the first every six weeks or so. People would ask him to baptize their child and he would have to tell them he would not be back until he had completed his circuit. Guiliani was feeling unfulfilled. Fortunately, this approach changed and Guiliani became the contact pastor of St. Mary's in the early 1980's. He served until 1983 at which time he became Pastor of Divine Saviour in York and Fr. Hal Weidner joined Boone, serving St. Mary’s.24

Guiliani brought with him several ideas. The first was the Vatican II’s openness to the empowerment of the laity or non-clergy. He put into effect the charisms or good gifts and talents that flow from God. Guiliani stated that he hoped to give the church to the laity so they could truly run their own parish. He empowered the parishioners to make decisions. Many were given keys to the buildings and they embraced the custodial responsibility. Prior to this time, many never had this trust placed in them. Mass began with those present holding hands around the altar. This gave the feeling of unity and accord. Then there was the idea of a gospel choir. The faith community enjoyed the current music ministry wherein the nuns, priests, and Boone sang. However, Guiliani had a great vision and believed music could be taken to greater heights to inspire and

24. Guiliani interview.
involve the entire congregation. He had seen and heard gospel choirs in Washington, DC and knew that one could be implemented at St. Mary's. The choir became so successful that it was in demand to perform, and soon travelled to parishes throughout South Carolina. The music embodies traditional hymns along with spirituals not commonly performed at conventional Catholic services. The choir exists today as both a Catholic and an ecumenical choir and it remains an important part of the 10 a.m. Sunday services at St. Mary's. Many attend for the uplifting music. More traditional music is also presented at 8 a.m. but with the same zeal and passion.\textsuperscript{25}

Over one hundred and thirty years ago, Fr. J.J. O’Connell of New York stated if Catholicism embraced a system of outstanding singing, sensational preaching, enthusiastic prayer, and awareness of the environment, members of the black community would come by the thousands.\textsuperscript{26} However, soon it was the white families that came into the black community and began to join St. Mary’s.

When the first white family joined in 1981, it was quite an occasion. They had attended mass at St. Mary’s, but were afraid they would not be accepted. Guiliani encouraged them. After mass on one Sunday morning, Rosemary and Bill Phillips approached the congregation and asked for permission from the congregation to become parishioners. The church was extremely quiet with pause, but soon the worshippers were

\textsuperscript{25} Guiliani interview, October 19, 2015; Ellis interview, November 13, 2015.

\textsuperscript{26} Fr. J.J. O’Connell, \textit{Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia}, (D & J Sadlier: New York, 1879), 421.
overcome with spirit and jubilant noise echoed throughout the building. The Phillips were accepted with open arms and other white families soon followed.²⁷

When Bruce and Mary Rose Randall came to Rock Hill in 1985, they immediately fell in love with St. Mary’s, struck by the warmth of its people. They had previously attended other parishes, but could not find a perfect fit until St. Mary’s. Soon, they became parishioners. There were about six other white families at the time. They continue to be parishioners and Mary Rose joined and continues to be a choir member. She recalled attending seminars for African American choirs and although in the minority, never feeling unwelcome. The Randalls value the multi-culture diversity, their strong friendships, and the Oratorians who administer the parish.²⁸

Unfortunately, in 1981 Friendship Junior College was closed due to financial difficulties. Clinton College remains the oldest institution for higher education in Rock Hill still in existence. Founded by the A.M.E. Zion, it remains Christian based and serves both men and women of all races.

During the 1980’s the Oratory was instrumental in founding two organizations that continue today to provide significant services for the community. In 1981, Tricia Kuhlkin, a parishioner of St. Anne’s, started the Pilgrims’ Inn. Despite her own personal tragedies and with the help of Fr. Richard Wahl, she established an outreach program. From a small and cramped office at the Oratory, Pilgrim’s Inn has grown to become a quality facility. It has developed into a homeless shelter for women and children,

²⁷. Giuliani interview.
²⁸. E-mail correspondence, Mary Rose Randall, November 21, 2015.
providing day care, transitional housing, job training, emergency assistance, and has been independent of the Oratory for some years. Its early years were overwhelming when the volunteers attempted to serve a daily meal in a cramped building. The struggles led to the founding of the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen which opened in April 1986.29

When the Boy Scouts of America moved from their facility at St. Mary’s Bannon Hall, Boone thought that the vacant space would make a wonderful soup kitchen. Two Catholic women, Beverly Carroll and Catherine Sullivan, along with Boone, Br. Joseph Guyon, and Valtierra met for months to set it up. It was under the jurisdiction of the Oratory for a number of years, but is now independent. However, it has always been an ecumenical organization. Named for Dorothy Day, who established many hospitality houses in New York City, the kitchen is a place where all are served as guests and there are no questions asked. In 2016, approximately 1200-1500 people are served per month and a hot lunches are served six days a week at Bannon Hall. There is no shortage of volunteers and they come from all walks of life. There are not only priests and ministers, but the majority are lay people, and range from college professors, students, working and retired, to those who have been helped and are returning the blessings. The kitchen is self-supporting through donations. Boone, Carroll, and Sullivan remain on the Board of Directors and are actively involved in its operation.30

29. See the following for information on Pilgrim’s Inn: Tricia Kuhlkin, “Most Have No Idea,” Friends of the Oratory newsletter, ” Spring, 2004; See Both of the following on Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen: Beverly Carroll, interview by author, Rock Hill, January 25, 2016; e-mail correspondence with Catherine Sullivan, February 2016; Pamphlet “Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen.”

30. Catherine Sullivan, “Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen,” Friends of the Oratory newsletter,” May 2010; Carroll, interview by author; e-mail correspondence with Catherine Sullivan; Pamphlet, Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen, 2016; Boone interview, February 12, 2016.
In 1989, Divine Saviour Hospital closed because of a lack of funds and nuns to administer its services. This hospital had been the first to integrate in South Carolina and to accept both Medicare and Medicaid. The numbers of working sisters dwindled to five and the remainder were elderly and unable to continue. Since the median age for nuns in South Carolina was seventy, there were no new recruits to save the hospital. York no longer had a hospital.31

On December 18, 1992, St. Mary's kindergarten closed. Boone sent a letter to parents advising it would not reopen after Christmas. Enrollment had been declining as there was no longer a need. Schools were now integrated and finally all children had equal access to free public education.32

_Growth of Community Involvement_

St. Mary’s has always administered an Outreach Program for the community which assisted those coming to the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen. It was informal, staffed by volunteers, and attended to needs as they arose. Boone and the Oratorians were always the helping hands when persons needed financial support, help, or encouragement, but there was no organized program to empower and mentor people to apply for and secure jobs. When Sue Fullerton and her husband moved to Rock Hill she saw that there was a need for expansion of services, based on their experience with prior

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ministry to the poor in California. Fran Lynch of St. Mary’s volunteered to open an office for three days a week and was encouraged to do so by the Oratorians. During the first few weeks no one came, but then people began to come in droves once word was passed along. At least thirty people a day lined up for services and the program was expanded. Mike Flenniken, a St. Mary’s parishioner, had retired and found his calling in assisting with the ministry with Fullerton in co-leadership.\textsuperscript{33}

St. Mary’s Outreach as evolved to what it is today through the work of the Oratorians and many volunteers. Every client is set up in paper files and treated with dignity and respect. Services encompass mentoring persons to secure jobs, providing rides to doctors and dentists for emergency care, helping to attain medications, eye exams, voter registration, and securing clothing vouchers for use at various thrift stores. Most importantly, people receive help to fill out legal documents, and obtain valid government identification. Without a valid government ID, people are unable to secure benefits, secure employment, obtain credit, or vote. Without transportation, since agencies are spread out across town and miles apart, many had gone for years without aid. Once a client visits, they are given help. Once social security cards are obtained and valid identification issued, the journey becomes easier. The volunteer staff also secures doctors and dentists who administer care without charge to the client.\textsuperscript{34}

Fullerton recalls many success stories. One is of a woman, who, to remain anonymous, will be referred to as Mary. Mary was a former heroin addict and came to

\textsuperscript{33} Susan Fullerton and Michael Flenniken, interview by author, Rock Hill, February 2, 2016

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
the office in a desperate situation. She was being evicted and Medicare would not be available for several months. Mary had broken her hip and was undergoing a painful recovery without therapy. The program immediately involved the Salvation Army which paid her rent for three months. Fullerton mentored Mary who earned her GED, obtained a job, and is now able to support herself. After a period of driver education administered by Fullerton, Mary was able to obtain her driver’s license, purchase an auto, and remains self-sufficient and without debt.\textsuperscript{35}

Funding comes in many ways and the program has never run out of money. Parish collections four times a year secure a large part of the funds and there are grants and many personal donations. In 2015, the Outreach Program operated on a budget of $15,000. The need is great for more dentists offering no cost services, volunteers, homeless shelters, tutors, and more cooperation among governmental agencies. In 2015, there were 1262 client visits. The office operates two days a week and is adjacent to the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen at St. Mary’s Bannon Hall. The steering committee is composed of members of both the Catholic and non-Catholic communities. The program is carrying out the legacy of Boone and the early Oratorians.\textsuperscript{36}

The Oratorians remain faithful to their mission and tenets of St. Philip Neri. Changes occur rapidly, but the Oratorians and empowered laity continue to adjust to the needs of the entire community. When people or any gender, race, or religion find

\textsuperscript{35} Fullerton and Flenniken, interview by author.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., interview by author; Social Steering Committee and Outreach minutes, September 27, 2015 and 2015 Statistics furnished by Fullerton.
themselves in difficult circumstances, the Oratorians are one of the first to assist as they continue to make changes within their own community for the benefit of others. Parish reassignments are not infrequent. At St. Mary’s, when Valtierra passed away in 2010, he was replaced after a short period by newly ordained Fr. Agustín Guzmán as Pastor and Administrator of St. Mary’s to lead the parish.
Chapter Six: The Leap from the Twentieth to the Twenty-first Century

While I breathe, I hope. (Dum Spiro Spero)
Prepared in Mind and Resources (Animis Opibusqe Paroti).

South Carolina’s two state mottoes

What it means to be a Catholic: The Church Today

There are various opinions as to what it means to be Catholic, how Catholicism differs from Protestantism, and where the twenty-first century church is headed. One belief is that assimilation must be understood by the white population in order for the church to accommodate other races or ethnic groups. The Catholic Church as a whole has been regarded as less of a "social body" than the Protestants and there are concerns about the decline of youth involvement. A church, any church, can be viewed as the means for the fulfillment of a race in every area of life because it allows one freedom, expression, and independence, to be part of a whole. However, blacks consider themselves not black Catholics, but Catholics, because of the sense of belonging to a universal church and not an individual sect.¹

For much of the twentieth century, religion as well as race separated southerners. White Catholics had the benefit of skin color but black Catholics had two obstacles to overcome for acceptance. As the turbulent 1960’s evolved, the issue was not so much anti-Catholic but anti-integration, and any attacks on Catholicism were a result of protests against Catholic support for integration. Many clergy did not advocate civil rights

activities; they believed that Catholic doctrine should automatically lead persons to practice both “spiritual and social equality.” In reality, this was not always the case, but the Catholic Church took and maintained a universal approach and belief in societal justice.²

When Boone was asked the question of the difference between Catholics and Protestants, he stated that Catholicism has always had an extremely strong sense of social justice. When asked, he listed his role in civil right as his most gratifying accomplishment. He asserted there were no other white people willing to stand up for civil rights and it was up to the Oratorians to lead. The bishop was wholeheartedly behind them, but his only stipulation was that Boone keep him informed of his activities.³

Mayor Doug Echols declared April 20, 2009 David Boone Day in Rock Hill. This commemorated his fifty years of service to St. Mary’s and service to the Park and Recreation Commission and Carolina Action Committee. The proclamation states that Boone has had an extraordinary influence on the civil rights movement, development of the park and recreation facilities, services for the poor, and the “establishment of a white mission church in the city’s African American community.” It further asserts that he “shaped hundreds of young lives and helped to improve the Crawford Road community.”⁴

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Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago, summarized demographics and reported information derived from the 2015 meeting of United States bishops. The bishops stated 24 percent of Americans call themselves Catholic and approximately 30 percent of the population at one time or another were Catholic. The number remains constant because people leave the faith, convert, and Catholic immigrants come to this country from such areas as Mexico and the Caribbean. The bishops reaffirmed that the Catholic Church differs from other religions because it is not a religious club and the Church has received its identity from Christ. Although only God knows the number of Catholics, the two basic components of Catholic identity remain: holding the apostolic faith and living under apostolic governance. Archbishop Francis George stated that every generation disputes church unity by wanting to live on their own terms but faith commands a surrender of one’s mind to God's truths, and true spiritual union requires a surrender of will to those appointed by Christ to govern the church. Archbishop George concluded: "Surrender of mind and will is always hard unless motivated by love."5

Another tenet of Catholicism is that Catholics believe the Eucharist is not just a symbol or ritual. It is the living presence of Christ and this is one of the distinctions from the Protestants.6 The mass has its highs and lows. There is prayer, reflection, and celebration, leading to the zenith of the service, the Eucharist.7


6. Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M., Render Unto Caesar (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 223. Chaput contends this is one of the beliefs the Protestant Reformation protested.

7. Dr. Terrance Chisolm, (hereinafter Chisolm), interview by author, Rock Hill, October 6, 2016.
When parishioners are asked the differences between Catholicism and Protestantism, there are various views. One presented by Etta Ziegler, a long time St. Mary’s parishioner, is that St. Mary’s has always administered programs such outreach. The community has always realized that “St. Mary’s is a come as you are congregation, we all have individual gifts received from God to offer, and everyone is accepted without reservations.” However, more fellowship and connection with the church is needed, perhaps at Sunday mass, from those utilizing the benefits.8

There are a good number of non-Catholics who attend St. Mary’s for the service and warm camaraderie. Melvin “Snow” Roseboro who broke through color barriers as one of the early black police officers and first black lieutenant in the City of Rock Hill, has been a member of Hermon Presbyterian Church for decades. Although he has not converted to Catholicism, he attends services at both Hermon Presbyterian and St. Mary’s faithfully every Sunday and serves as a 10 a.m. mass greeter and official bell ringer. Roseboro stated until five years ago he had never been inside a Catholic church but was invited by a co-worker and musician for the choir and he felt the spirit came upon him and has never left.9

Dub Massey, one of the Friendship Nine, said in a 1981 interview that people must not separate from their churches. The church should be foremost before independent

8. Ziegler interview.

organizations and sometimes it is all we have. It was and still is the center of the community and brings people together.10

The Legacy Continues: A word about Brother David Boone

Today, St. Mary's has parishioners consisting of individuals, families, and all races. All are welcome, Catholic or not. Love and involvement reign. Bannon Hall now houses the Dorothy Day Soup Kitchen, social events, neighborhood meetings, Outreach, and church archives. By entering Bannon Hall, there is a sense of spirit and hope for a better future. There is still segregation in the community but much has changed.

History books give little attention to the Catholic Church’s contributions to civil rights and the betterment of the community, but this can be best expressed by the quiet manner in which it operates. For example: there are two descriptions which summarize Boone’s methods. Fr. Joseph Wahl stated “I think everyone here knows that Brother David loves God and his neighbor and he has a quiet way of getting things done with little fanfare or praise.”11 Michael Rukstelis, former St. Mary’s parishioner and author of bRINGING iT aLL bACK hOME, stated that had it not been for Boone’s willingness and availability to serve but “his ability to empower people in quiet, enduring ways that will mark his legacy to the people of St. Mary’s Parish.” Rukstelis further stated that after Martin Luther King Jr., Boone was so respected that he was routinely called by the police to calm demonstrating youth.12 In 2016, Boone continues to serve on the Rock Hill Parks


12. Rukstelis, bRINGING iT aLL bACK hOME, 65-66.
and Recreation Committee where he has been on the board for almost fifty years. In addition, he is on the board of Carolina Community Actions, Inc., (SCACAP) where he has been a member since 1978. Its purpose is to promote self-reliance through job training and education to overcome the dire effects of poverty. In his “spare time” he also participates with the NAACP and Friendship Nine Association.

Betty Jo Rhea, born in 1930 into a Catholic home, recalled growing up in Rock Hill. Her father was a physician at St. Philip’s Hospital. She remembers the early Oratorians who were close to the community and like family. In her home she still retains the table which was used for their card games. Throughout the years through the church and politics, her path crossed with the Oratorians. Rhea served on the Parks and Recreation board, and three terms as mayor of Rock Hill for twelve years beginning in the 1980’s. She talked of Boone specifically, the young man whom she first met while he was still wearing “knickers,” and his special love for the community. Rhea believes one of the major reasons there are good relations in Rock Hill and that it is the Good Town of today, is because of Boone and the Oratorians’ efforts for over the past sixty plus years.13

Now and Tomorrow: Conclusion

The Oratorians continue to celebrate a special mass at noon on the first Saturday of every month, dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This is gratitude for leading

them through the frustrating years in the 1940’s and allowing St. Mary’s to be born. The church in Rock Hill has come a long way in three-quarters of a century.  

Demographics have changed. According to the Roman Catholic Church, there are over 1,253,926,000 Catholics in the world today. The estimated population of South Carolina in July 2015 was 4,896,146, with 71,548 residing in Rock Hill. In Rock Hill the population was 68.4 percent white. Catholics are no longer less than one-half of one percent of the population as they were in the 1930’s-1940’s. Catholics are now four percent of South Carolina’s population. St. Mary’s in 2015 has grown to 505 registered Catholic households, which is a 182.1% growth from 2006. Of the five parishes in York County which the Oratorians minister, there are 6,124 Catholic households, comprised of 18,737 individuals. Many do not register at parishes so the exact number of Catholics remains an estimate, at best.

When Fr. Hatch brought two dozen very young men to Rock Hill in 1935, they faced many obstacles: youth and inexperience, the Jim Crow South, poverty, and prejudice against Catholics. However, despite this, the Oratorians, assisted by the sisters and members of this community, and others who never ventured south of the Mason-


17. “Ten Year Catholic Growth by County,” Diocese of Charleston Office of Planning and Operations, obtained from Fr. Agustín Guzmán, St. Mary’s Church.
Dixon Line, survived and adapted to the needs of a changing world. They operated a boy’s home, founded St. Mary’s, ministered to all races, educated, converted, empowered, and fought for social justice. The Catholic Church in Rock Hill has never drawn color, religious, or socio-economic lines. It was and remains instrumental in transforming the community to what it is today and will become tomorrow. Gone are many of the early priests, brothers, and nuns, but the spirit of St. Philip Neri is forever present. The five parishes served by the Oratorians offer diverse services encouraging the participation of all. Masses are celebrated to accommodate ethnic groups such as Spanish and Vietnamese. In addition to the food pantry, soup kitchen, Knights of Columbus organizations, and outreach programs, the Church provides spiritual and emotional support. There are parish councils, committees for liturgy, evangelization, and prison ministry, and ongoing support for those who need healing, such as Rachel’s Vineyard (abortion), victim assistance, and bereavement support. As in the early years, there is religious education, as well as camaraderie in prayer breakfasts, ethnic dinners, and pilgrimages. The parish priests monitor their cell phones 24/7 and someone at the Oratory is always available to assist in an emergency. There are currently eleven Oratorians in residence at Rock Hill. As laity involvement grows, deacons are ordained and contribute to the spiritual needs of the community.¹⁸

Deacon Terrance Chisolm reflects that St. Mary has grown and will continue to grow because it was founded on a base of converts who brought in distinctive styles that

¹⁸. Overview on church organizations from Sunday bulletins St. Mary’s and St. Anne’s. The parishes are All Saints, Divine Savior, St. Anne’s, St. Mary’s, and St. Philip Neri. Fr. Joseph Wahl, (the oldest member of the Oratory), passed away on April 30, 2016.
messed together. As the community grew, a new generation arose and integrated into the church’s rich traditions and no one was excluded. St. Mary’s is unique as it uplifts the oppressed whether it is physical or spiritual because of our parish’s strong sensitivity and understanding of others. People reach out, are greeted as they enter the edifice, and no one is ever feels unwelcome or leaves as a stranger.19

When Pope Francis came to the U.S. in 2015, a bus full of pilgrims, which included Rock Hillians, greeted him in Philadelphia as a symbol of faith. They prepared two hand-made blankets which tied together fringed edges of sheets. Each knot symbolized a problem specifically in the life of each person putting together the blanket. Kathy Schmugge, Director of Family Life for the Diocese of Charleston, stated that each knot is a tribute to the pope's devotion to "Our Lady Undoer of Knots." The blankets were given to persons in need. Schmugge summarized our community: "Together, we all have struggles. We share them, we help each other and things get better." The pilgrims felt Christian and Catholic solidarity and acknowledged no one is alone. They realized the need to reach out beyond Rock Hill to make the world a united and loving place. They looked to the Pope to overcome the obstacles facing the Church in the twenty-first century: gay marriage, divorce, immigration, and again, civil rights.20 History reflects, records, and chronicles the meeting of persons and circumstances, and our present cannot

19. Chisolm interview.

escape from the past. Every period draws and builds upon the good and evil from past generations.21

St. Mary’s celebrated seventy years of service in 2016. Prior to the celebration on July 2, 2016, which was commemorated with a picnic, Henry James Walton, a widower for some years, was united in marriage with Cynthia Elder Harris at St. Mary’s Church. At Walton’s request, Fr. Agustín Guzmán, Pastor of St. Mary’s, officiated the simple ceremony.22 Gone are Tevlin and the vending machine that provided the first wedding feast, but the spirit remains. A community feast replaced the crackers and Coca Cola Tevlin had given the newly-wedded couple over fifty years ago. Later that afternoon, the church celebrated with its annual picnic which continues to bring the community together. The following day, the church rejoiced with an African style liturgy in commemoration of St. Mary’s 70 years of service, along with a special reunion for the Emmett Scott Class of 1966.23

The Oratorians have elected a new provost, Fr. Fabio Refosco. Guzmán was moved to All Saints, another of the parishes administered by the Oratorians, and replaced with Fr. Joseph Pearce at St. Mary’s. This was the result of the retirement of Fr. Ed McDevitt at All Saints and the joint efforts of the Oratory family, Guzmán, and the Deputy Congregation of the Oratory to meet the needs of the diverse communities. The


22. Author witnessed ceremony performed on July 2, 2016.

23. Wedding ceremony attended by author, July 2, 2016 at 2 p.m., St Mary Church. Refer to p. 62 in this paper for reference to first marriage. Also refer to church bulletin, June 19, 2016 for announcements.
world, country, and community have changed, but the spirit and resilience of its people, the Catholic Church, and the Oratorians in particular, have not faltered.

Many await the November 2016 elections. There has been turmoil in major cities, racial strife, immigration issues, and a continuance of poverty, illiteracy, and misunderstandings. History often repeats itself. Boone stated that the Oratorians will adjust to the current times, as needs arise. As the church continues in York County, South Carolina in this twenty-first century, it continues to be true to its mission and the principles of Neri. St. Philip Neri was a man of the people and preached love and understanding, not violence. Fr. Guiliani believes one of the "hallmarks" of the Oratorians and reasons for their success, like St. Philip, is that they always have been very close to the community and can identify its needs quickly. When asked about the future, Guiliani smiles and affirms, "We are in God's hands."24

24. Boone interview, October 14, 2016; Guiliani Interview, October 19, 2015.
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