

On Pilgrimage - Jul/Aug 1968

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*Summary: Reports on their move to a renovated building on First Street, the move, the cost. Describes programs for children up near the farm in Tivoli. Mentions just published *A Penny a Copy*, a reader of articles from the paper. Goes on retreat and visits friends. (DDLW #887).*

Seldom have we known such a hot summer, with day following day of heavy heat, the air so humid that it is hard to breathe and hard to think. Moisture drips from the hand that holds the pen, papers become damp, and to get out of clerical work it is good to take refuge in manual labor. There has been plenty of that this summer, in the work at Tivoli, and in the city.

Finally the city's certificate of occupancy came through and we started to move even before it came to hand. Just the news of it began the move. Because I was in town, the women were moved first, and three of the apartments at Kenmare Street, where we had been living for years, were vacated in one day. Now two more have been emptied and only Marie remains in hers, which we will keep for her. Millie also remains in her own quarters on Spring Street, but both women are with us for meals and very much a part of the family. We are happy indeed in our new apartments. The address is now 36 East First Street, N.Y. 10003. The hangings, the pictures, the statues of St. Francis of Assisi and of St. Joseph, our patrons, look beautiful indeed in the new clean setting. In the tiny garden in the back, the four little ailanthus trees (the tree of heaven), which Mary Hughes planted before she went to San Francisco, are growing beautifully. Underneath the brightly colored lettered sayings of Fr. Delp and Camus, which hang on the old brick wall, Italian Mike, Smokey Joe, Scotty, Whiskers and others of the family sit outside and talk.

Accounting

It seems to me that it was two years or more ago that we started to buy the new house, but I will have to get the exact dates from Ruth Collins, without whose help we would not have the new house. Credit goes also to Jean Goldstone, who was general overseer and engineer all through the rebuilding of the house to conform to all the rules and regulations of the building department, and to Seth Hiller, the architect, who planned and replanned the layout for the four apartments and main floor and basement which made up the house. The cost of the house was \$35,000 and the cost of rebuilding was \$45,000, more or less. On the first sum,

\$8,000 was paid down and there are two mortgages. The paying off of the mortgages, with interest and taxes, has been going on since we began the work. It has been a heavy burden on us, paying rents and paying off the mortgage at the same time, and gathering money to pay for the repairs. On those repairs we still owe \$12,000.

I have a rough list in my diary of the money which has been coming in for the house, and I think I shall do as the Peacemakers do in their bulletin—list initials of donors and if some feel that they have been left out, let me know and I shall be glad to add their names to the roster of those who have helped house the homeless and comfort the afflicted. Admittedly this is a rough outline, but it is the best I can do at the moment when we are surrounded by so much work and so many people that it is hard to organize for thought or writing. \$20.00, N.P.; Anon, \$10.00; M.A.B., \$20.00; Dallas, \$30.00; J.B., \$50.00; E.W., \$5.00; Anon priest, \$2.00; E.L. \$5.00; legacy, \$20.00; Anon, \$30.00; C.M. \$5.00; Mrs. R. \$10.00; K.G. \$3.00; M.S. \$3.00; M.A. \$11.95; McD. \$15.60; Anon, \$20.00; C.M. \$5.00; M.R. \$10.00; McD. \$10.00; Anon, \$25.00; G.P. \$50.00; Anon, \$4.00; E.L. \$5.00; legacy, \$90.00.

Ruth Collins remains manager of the house and we are incorporated in Albany to hold property under the name of the Catholic Worker Companions, Inc.; the trustee of which is Janet Burwash, who follows the directions of the unincorporated association of Catholic Workers, made up of a small group of those in charge of the farm at Tivoli and the house of hospitality in New York, and whose names appear on the masthead of the CW.

These details of ownership and responsibility have been worked out over the last three years and are the result of experience, and the advice of our lawyer, John Coster, who is a member of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists.

Mid August

After the women were settled in, and the rest of the moving was going on, I went back to the farm which has been teeming with children all summer. As usual the village of Tivoli has had a recreation program for the younger children, which has meant games in the ballpark in the village in the morning and three hours in our swimming pool in the afternoon. And since the day-care center for the migrant and local agricultural workers in the district began in July (and will continue until November first) these little children have participated in the recreation program for the village. It is a joy to see all the little ones lined up at the shallow end of the pool waiting for their individual instruction in swimming. There are thirty-two children from ten months old up to eight years, and they begin to arrive at seven in the morning. The casino, which was built by Mr. Mastrion, the former owner of the property when he was using it for a vacation spot for families, and the swimming pool, certainly have proved a blessing to the community as well as to us. One end of the casino was made into a chapel for the farm so that we would be close to the Blessed Sacrament winter and summer, and every night the rosary and compline are said there, and all our friends and benefactors are remembered. Every Wednesday morning, one of the Marist fathers come from their novitiate nearby to offer Mass for us.

Steinway and Bar Exchange

There had been a bar in the casino which had served as a dance floor, and I was happy to donate the bar to the American Legion, which in turn donated to us two pianos, one of them a Steinway. We had to take both, and the other is most suitable for the children to enjoy in the casino. No banging will hurt it, nor will the noise bother us.

Donal Brown, chemist at the Corning Glass Works, Steuben County, is really responsible for the Day Care center. Last August I visited him and he conducted me on a tour of some of the migrant camps in his area. He spoke of the difficulty of finding suitable places where Day Care Centers could be set up and showed me some of the facilities used, which were not as convenient as our casino. I spoke of this to Gus Rhodes and Mrs. Pearl Johnson at the Office of Economic Opportunity, now located at Dover Plains, New York and within a few weeks the Center was set up to shelter the children last September and October. It was a question of learning by doing. This year everything is going more smoothly, and the Youth Corps is participating, helping the group leaders who consist of young people from the neighborhood. The work is staggered so that some come early and leave at two-thirty and others have split shifts and can take time off to swim or rest. After five in the afternoon all the little ones have gone home to the camps or to their homes, and then there is a clean up. Last night two seminarians from the Marists did a thorough job of mopping and straightening out. There are always a few volunteers around among the girls who are visiting us, so one never hears a baby cry. In addition to our pool there are several small plastic pools for the babies to refresh themselves in, and what a lovely sight they are!

It is “holy mother the state” which provides all food and the furnishings for this work, cots and cribs, tables and chairs, playground furniture for the children, and other volunteers come in with games and toys. In the evening when the place is quiet one can find Sally Corbin (aged six) busily engaged in reading all the books in the little library.

Our last issue came out June 6th. It was a May-June issue and may have reached you much later since we were embroiled in packing to move. June 6th I had lunch with Betty Bartelme, Religious Editor of Macmillan's, to celebrate the coming out of **A Penny a Copy**, a **Catholic Worker** reader, compiled by Tom Cornell and James Forest of the Catholic Peace Fellowship, and typed up by Marge Hughes, one of our editors. Not much attention was paid to Catholic Worker editors' choices of writings, nor were we shown proofs of our own writings, so that some mistakes occurred. For instance in an article of mine in which I tried to deal with the reasons for our returning interest money to the city of New York, the word **compromise** is printed as **comprise**. My meaning was blurred, to say the least.

However, it is good reading and I spent an evening with it with great enjoyment. And I must concede it is a better reader than the one Ammon Hennacy was preparing some years ago, which was filled with bits of this and that from articles, rather at the expense of unity and logic, so that it seemed a bit too much like a patchwork quilt. Besides, it would have been about a thousand pages long. **A Penny a Copy** was reviewed last week in **Ave Maria** by an old friend of ours who had known us since our beginnings on East Fifteenth Street and Avenue A. He helped furnish our first house of hospitality. I liked the review (it was a feature article) very much indeed.

The McCormacks

The next day, Charles and Agnes McCormack picked me up at Kenmare Street and drove me through the terrible Long Island traffic to East Hampton, where we were to spend the weekend with the Whalens. Duane and Mary met at the Catholic Worker Friday night meeting just before the close of World War II. She had been studying art in New York and was on her way back to the midwest and by chance dropped in at 115 Mott Street. It was love at first sight. When they married they took a little apartment on Elizabeth Street and began housekeeping with donations from our Italian neighbors and the CW. Duane was a lawyer, like his father before him, and his first case was one of our CW men who had wandered while drinking into a respectable home and, helping himself to a bottle of liquor, steeled down to enjoying TV. He was surprised to find the charge of breaking and entering lodged against him, more surprised to find himself enjoying the hospitality of the jail when he had expected dismissal of the case. Duane was not a very good lawyer, Joe concluded. He was better at real-estate law and after their first child the Whalens went to Long Island and, with Duane's sister and her husband, a community was started which has become populous indeed. There are twelve children in the Whalen family and ten in the Konceliks'. Or have I skipped a few? Their first houses, which the young couples built themselves, were three-room cabins with a pump at the kitchen sink, and an outhouse which satisfied the plumbing requirements. They lived in these cabins, with the heat supplied by a kitchen stove, until the fifth child in each family was born and then with loans from relatives and their own savings, houses were built which have grown in size over the years. The cabins are still there to take care of guests. The Konceliks have cows. What a joyful and successful little community has grown up here. The pine woods are all around and the beach only a quarter of a mile away. A utopia indeed, I'm thinking, as I sit in the city at a typewriter on a hot Saturday in August.

The occasion for this visit was the graduation of Maria, one of the Whalen daughters, from the Academy at Sag Harbor and I had been invited to speak. Sag Harbor is an old whaling town.

Retreat

This year in July I had the great joy of making a retreat (from Sunday to the following Saturday) led by a group from Fr. Lombardi's Better World Movement, a young Redemptorist priest, Fr. Salvatore Umame, CSSR., Thomas Tewey, Christian Brother, and Phyllis Evans. It was thanks to Jean Walsh that I was able to make this retreat, which was attended by priests, nuns, and laymen, numbering altogether about forty. My only criticism would be that it was crowded with too much talk and discussion, and not enough time for reading and digesting the material we were studying. Living in community one hungers and thirsts for time alone, and silence, especially in a greatly diversified group such as this was.

Meeting

I drove from Long Branch, New Jersey, where the retreat took place, to Fellowship Farm near Pottstown, Pa., where Marjorie Penney and her husband, the scientist Victor Paschkis, introduced me to a high-school-age crowd of young people who had come to work and study the problems of the world around them. It was here that I met Charles Butterworth, years ago, who worked both in Staten Island and New York, and is now doing the same kind of work in Philadelphia, with students from LaSalle University, at Joseph House at 1807 North 8th Street. I was well repaid for the effort of speaking in such heat as we have been having by seeing the vigorous and exciting dancing which went on all evening, led by a Kalmuk, a descendent from Genghis Khan, it was said. He looked to me as though he had come from Siberia, or Mongolia, and the folk dances he taught the young crowd he was instructing were a joy to watch. He is married to a Brazilian and I enjoyed holding their baby while the young couple danced.

Back in New York the next day I arrived in time to receive a visit from Monsignor Paul Hanley Furfey and Dr. Elizabeth Walsh both of whom had helped us much one summer when we had a conference house on Staten Island years ago.

I spent the next ten days commuting between Tivoli and city, and then went by bus to Brockport, New York, west of Rochester, to speak to a crowd of Vista workers in training to work with the migrants who come to New York State to work in potatoes and apple picking. I was happy to find Helen Marie Gauchat there, returned from her Peace Corps duty in El Salvador and now teaching Spanish to a Peace Corps group. She brought her classes to the meeting that evening. Helen Marie is daughter of Bill and Dorothy Gauchat, who have for many years represented the Catholic Worker in the Detroit area and have a tremendous work of their own, caring for Mongoloid, spastic, cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy children. What a work of mercy this is!

Rochester

That night I stayed with the Farrens, Art and Mary, who are still in charge of the Rochester House of Hospitality. We went to Fr. Ehman's Mass next morning and listened to a beautiful homily about St. Camillus, who was forerunner of the Red Cross, ministering to both sides in the armies of those days. He worked despite a painful ulcer on his leg which never healed, and it made me think of our Missouri Marie, whose legs are swollen with ulcers, heavily bandaged, yet she still hobbles about and keeps up with the duties she has imposed upon herself around the house of hospitality. I am praying to him to heal her.