

# York Place Started 1850 In Charleston

BY LOUISE PETTUS  
AND RON CHEPESIUK

Records in the Winthrop College Archives document the interesting history of one of York County's most enduring institutions. The Episcopal Church Home for Children, in York, a residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed children that is now called York Place, has a history that started in 1850 in Charleston.

In the mid-1840s, the Rev. Thomas Dupont and the Rev. Cranmore Wallace began the work that led to the church home's founding on April 15, 1850.

According to the "Fundamental Rules" adopted by the church home, its purpose was to "provide a place of refuge and a support to indigent females of good character."

In addition, the home was to be a "strictly religious institution and, in close connection with the church, the Bishop of South Carolina, for the time being, should be president of the institution."

A statement from the 1859 report reads, "Though no children are excluded on account of the religion of their parents, the home especially appeals to members of the Episcopal Church as bringing up their girls in her doctrines, worship, habits and ways."

It is not known exactly when boys were first admitted to the home, but in the amended laws of 1895 the words "destitute children" first appeared.

By the early 1900s, the church home's quarters were cramped and couldn't accommodate all applicants. It became evident that the home would have to be moved to another site in Charleston or elsewhere.

The Episcopal Church received offers from all over South Carolina, including Winnsboro, Greenwood, Columbia, Spartanburg, and York (then called Yorkville).

York civic leaders made an irresistible offer: the old Kings Mountain Military Academy building with 10 acres of land; water and lights for 10 years; the free

service of dentists and physicians; and \$4,000 from Mayor Walter Moore, a prominent York resident.

It was no contest. The church moved to Yorkville in 1909. Just prior to the move, Moore was elected secretary and treasurer of the church home's board and then began a period of devoted service to the home that extended over four decades.

During the next 40 years the church grew rapidly. The property increased in size and value; a fine chapel, giving "a proper spiritual atmosphere" was erected; and the endowment fund increased.

The records reveal that several superintendents played a prominent role in the church home's development since it moved to York. The Rev. Thomas Noe, for example, served for 20 years until his retirement in December 1940. He showed great skill by keeping the church home open during the Depression.

F.D. McClean took over from Noe, and under his direction several important developments occurred. The farm was mechanized; the laundry, print shop and dairy were equipped. A new heating plant was placed in each cottage and many repairs were made.

In 1938, one of the church leaders, the Rev. O.T. Porcher, along with friends of the family, started a fund for a chapel in memory of Harriet Porcher. This led to the construction of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd with its memorial on April 3, 1940.

Moore's death in 1947 saddened the entire church. Under his leadership, the church home's permanent fund had grown to \$170,000.

Records show that between 1909 and 1947, the Episcopal Church Home for Children cared for 1,069 children.

Today the church home is considered one of the finest residential treatment programs of its kind in the Southeast. It is under the direction of H.S. Howie Jr., who for 27 years has served as executive director.

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