

The Founding of "Faith Home"

It has been said that our "Colonial" ancestors knew how to build houses as well as "Constitutions". It may even be that they built one more enduringly than the other, for many of their mansions still stand, firm in joice and beam, having required in two centuries no more serious repaire than shingles and paint, while the Constitution has had nineteen alterations, and there are those who insist several more will be necessary before the venerable document can be considered politically waterproof.

When our "Colonial" ancestor built his home, there were no professional architects, but there were many master builders who had served under the creators of the English manor house and the fascinating chateaux of France.

History shows that the remembrance of a nations glory in the past stimulates to national glory in the future, so this house that was built almost two hundred years ago, through the generations, has kept its noble heritance and the atmosphere of dignity still prevails through its gracious rooms.

The wonder at times at the wealth that existed here in Portsmouth in the colonial days, the shipping industry was flourishing here and Portsmouth was the main port through which trade was transacted with the population in and around this territory. The war known as the French and Indian war, which lasted seven years, ended in 1762. It was the struggle between England and France on this continent. It changed the history of this country. The merchants as well as the ship builders, and those in the employ of the King's ships as traders, made their fortunes.

In the book called "Portsmouth, Histories and Picturesque", this house is described as located on the north side of Deer St. opposite High St. The house was built by Daniel Hart, brother of Richard Hart who had built his house at the rear of this lot in the year 1737. We do not have any records of how many years Daniel Hart lived here, but during the struggle of the Revolutionary War, Mrs. Richard Shortridge, kept a boarding house here in 1780, when the French fleet was in the harbor, many of the officers boarded here. A very un gallant incident associated with Gov. Benning Wentworth in connection with the Shortridge family occurred, Richard Shortridge's wife was Holly Fitman, and previous to Governor Benning Wentworth's marriage to Martha Hilton, he had proposed to Holly Fitman, but Holly was engaged to Richard Shortridge, whom she married soon after.

The Governor was indignant and did not forget the rebuff, for soon after Shortridge was seized by a press gang from an English frigate in the harbor and retained for seven years before he escaped and returned to his wife. Years passed and another prosperous merchant purchased the home. Peter Jenness lived here for a number of years, then the house became the home of a Mr. Vanderhoof and some years later it became the property of Miss. C. A. Young.

From now on I shall quote from the report of the Faith Home issued between the years 1876-1879. This report was loaned to me by the Trustees.

On July 28, 1875, a letter of invitation was sent to Mr. Wm. Hurd and Mr. Leyne by pastors of different churches located in Portsmouth. Both Mr. Hurd and Mr. Leyne were located at that time in Dover, N. H., doing city missionary work, the letter read as follows:

Portsmouth, N. H.
July 28, 1876.

Messers, Hurd and Leyne:
Dear Brothers:

We, the undersigned pastors of this city, most cordially unite in inviting you to visit us, and labor in our midst in the interest of temperance, if you come you will have our prayers our sympathetic co-operation.

Fraternally

Charles Martyn, Pastor, North Church
W. A. Libbard " Universalist Church
E. A. Bailey " Methodist
John A. Goss " Christian

In Mr. Leyne's report of that work, he speaks of the hearty co-operation of the Woman's Temperance League. He says the work was commenced with the intention of remaining four weeks in the cause of temperance, the work was not as successful as we had expected, yet we thanked God that we had not toiled in vain, for some were led to forsake their cups.

While here Mr. Leyne says "My heart was drawn toward the people. Friends invited us to accept the situation of general missionary, but the idea was foreign, when I came to Portsmouth, of remaining beyond the time for which I was invited. Mr. Hurd at the end of three weeks deemed it best to other fields of labor. The day previous to his leaving, I had an impression, while at prayer, that it might be the Lord's will for me to take

up my abode here as missionary. While visiting that morning with Mr. Hurd, He said in a very earnest manner, "Brother Leyne you ought to remain here in Portsmouth, the people are so anxious to have you, will you". I told him that I would think more about it and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for three days and nights, the subject was before me. With a good trade, steady employment, and compensation large enough to support my family, supply all their needs, am I willing to resign all, to be dependent on the Lord alone. I must now trust God and not man, and so after much prayer and fasting, I felt confident that it was my duty to move my family to Portsmouth, the burden was gone and the joy of the Lord filled my soul. though the way was often dark, still I have never doubted the power of God or the willingness of my Saviour to help me.

The next thought that occupied my mind was, where shall we live, will any one let us a house, we have no salary, neither have any prospect of receiving support. I asked the Lord to direct us in the right, for I knew not what to do.

The house 17 Hill St. was the only one vacant that appeared to be adapted to our needs (for we intended to make our home the home of the Lord's poor). The rent, the late Henry I. Garrett informed us would be fourteen dollars, though not in advance. About half an hour after this conversation, I met with a gentleman who presented us with five dollars, knowing nothing of my circumstances, but doubtless thinking that I needed help. This was the first gift, the promise "Before ye call, I will answer, was verified in this instant occurrence.

Thus the work began, we have had many answers to prayers. Without asking any human aid. We were provided with all that was needed, both for ourselves and the many who sat at our table, who were hungry and destitute. Our first year was closed free of debt. From Sept. 15, 1875 to Sept. 15, 1876, we received in voluntary collections \$575.74.

It was while visiting among the people of the city, that I saw the great need of a permanent home for old ladies. I had never thought where the money to provide for the "Home" was to be obtained, but I knew if it was the will of the Lord to have such an institution established in our midst, there would be no difficulty in obtaining the same.

At this time Rev. Charles Fowler was holding a series of revival meetings in our city. I mentioned the subject to him and together we had a long session of holy communion with God. I now felt the time had come to act in the matter.

Within an hour before the time of leaving Mr. Fowler, a noble Christian gentleman, entirely unsolicited, presented me with \$500.00 towards establishing a "Home" for aged women, to be known as "Faith Home".

We thought it best to buy a piece of land to build thereon, it was difficult to find just the right spot, but finally, Ex. Mayor Frank E. Miller offered us a lot of land at the corner of South and Broad Streets for five hundred dollars, worth at the time at least eight hundred dollars, with the following restrictions, that if the land was not needed within in two years the money would be returned to the donor, without interest.

Everything worked well until the building plans were presented when it was found there was not a union of feeling in regard to the work, the board of trustees that had been invited to help us in the work, thought we ought to have the money pledged, so as to pay for the building, before we talked of plans and specifications, others thought the location not the best, while others were of the opinion it would be better to purchase a house already built, and several were suggested.

A few days after, I received a message from Miss. C.A. Young that she would like to see me. I called on her, and she stated she was ready to sell her house, if we could agree as to the price. I took the subject to the Lord in earnest prayer, it was a great question to decide to purchase a house worth seven thousand seven hundred dollars and not a cent in the treasury or an earthly friend to look to for aid. Miss. Young thought it somewhat strange, the idea of purchasing a house so large and costly, without money, yet she believed and doubted not that it was the Lord's work.

This was the real faith part of the work. The house was purchased at that time without a dollar to even bind the bargain. The agreement was, that I must pay two hundred dollars in one week from the time the bargain was closed, and three thousand dollars in ninety days, the two hundred that was paid first to be included in part of the three thousand dollars. Six days passed and not a cent. Without any one being asked for money, except our Heavenly Father, on the seventh, toward evening, about two hours before the time in which the first payment was to be made, a widow lady called at my residence and said she had brought two hundred dollars toward the payment of the "Home". Thus I was enabled to make the first payment. Many kind friends encouraged me and donations came but within eleven days of the three thousand dollars. On the morning of the decisive day, I retired to my closet, and there before God, knelt in earnest prayer.

The 31st Psalm came fresh to my mind and heart to cheer and comfort me.

"In the Oh Lord do I put my trust, let me never be ashamed; deliver me in thy righteousness; bow down thine ear to me, deliver me speedly, be thou my strong rock." It was a critical time, only three hours remaining and fifteen hundred dollars needed. I remained in my room until eleven o'clock. Only one short hour ere victory or defeat must come, still there was no sign of relief. Fifteen minutes later I was suddenly impressed to leave the house, assured of deliverance, I called at the Post Office, expecting an order might have been sent through the mail, but none came, waiting there a moment and lifted up my heart in silent prayer. After leaving the Post Office, I met two friends, who inquired about the work and they at once pledged themselves to give five hundred each, toward the payment, two ladies sent me one hundred each, another friend asked me to call at his house and he presented me with one hundred dollars, three of his friends, fifty dollars each, and another signed himself a Lover of the Lord, and gave me fifty dollars more. By twelve o'clock noon, on August 11, 1876, the Lord had given us the three thousand dollars, exclusive of the five hundred dollars paid previously for the building lot.

And so "Faith Home" was dedicated on Tuesday, Oct. 31, 1876. It was a very interesting occasion and drew a large concourse of people, large numbers were obliged to go away, unable to get within hearing distance. And so "Faith Home" is significant. "Jehovah has moved the hearts of many to devise liberal things.

An act incorporating the trustees of this home by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court of the State of New Hampshire was enacted July 7, 1877.

President William Sims (Sims)
Secretary Edward E. Goodall
Treasurer William Sims
Manager William Leyne (Leyne)

In closing, I must say that the founders of this home had no selfish ambitions to gratify, no craving for notierty, and no mercenary ends to be secured.

The work was begun with full confidence in the Word of God. And is only one of the many instances of the effects of simple faith.

Written for the "Home for Aged Women"

By

Mrs. Inez McIntire, Head at the annual
donation party, 1937.