



**UMCOR Sager Brown** has its origins in New Orleans. In 1867 a group of women in New Orleans formed the Orphan's Home Society Corporation. This was a means of raising money to provide a home for African American boys who had been orphaned by the Civil War. It was funded primarily by the Freedman's Aid Society, a predecessor to the Black College Fund of the United Methodist Church, and John Baldwin, a plantation owner in St. Mary Parish, La.

Very early in the life of the orphanage, a large monetary gift given by William Gilbert of Winsted, Conn., allowed a school for African Americans to be built with Dr. W. D. Godman as director. The institution was named the Orphans Home and the Gilbert Academy and Industrial School. Eventually, Gilbert Academy was moved to New Orleans near Dillard University and became a preparatory school. The school in Baldwin, grades one through eight, then became known as Godman Industrial School. Godman and his wife directed the school and the orphanage and were also responsible for building a Methodist Church on the property.

In the early 1900s, the Orphan's Home and Godman Industrial School were in dire financial straits. Dr. & Mrs. Godman took the student choir, the Jubilee Singers, on a tour of the northeastern United States to raise money. Mrs. Addie Sager and Mrs. C. W. Brown became familiar with the plights of the organization through a concert given for the North Central New York Methodist Conference. Sager and Brown purchased the school and gave it to the Women's Home Mission Society, a forerunner of the Women's Division of the UMC, to operate. The institution was known as Sager Brown Home and Godman School until 1978. That year, the home and school closed, and the property was put up for sale. Twenty-eight acres and 10 brick buildings on beautiful Bayou Teche were for sale for \$100,000—but there were no buyers. The property sat vacant for fourteen years!

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew hit the coast of south Louisiana causing major damage to the area around Baldwin. UMCOR came to the area with volunteers and supplies and used the old Sager Brown campus to stage their operations. After two years, UMCOR determined that the Sager Brown Campus would be an excellent location to build an UMCOR depot where disaster relief could be collected and provided to the world. The depot opened in 1996.

Many see the hand of God prominent in the events that formed the history of the Orphan's Home Society. It was preserved through hardship and changes until it could again be a healing ministry to those in need. The road beside the UMCOR Sager Brown campus is still today called, "Orphan's Home Road"; the property continues to be owned by the Women's Division of the UMC and the site is a significant piece of Black History.

The campus today is a living, working monument to over a century of United Methodist mission. UMCOR is a leader in service for the UMC to those who are hungry, displaced, sick or in poverty because of natural or human-made disasters. UMCOR serves in 81 countries of the world. Each year more than 3,000 volunteers come to USB to work in the UMCOR Depot or in service to the community of Baldwin, La., to help make a difference for people who are suffering.