

New Orleans Updates

from Sr. Maureen and her elves
Sunday, February 17, 2008



Ottis Teresa's house

Like a grand dame from a Dickens novel, she beckoned. The Austrian curtains, the piano, the marble fireplace, all speak of richer times. The gauzy curtains hang unevenly in the window. The dusty piano in the parlor is covered with an old tarp. Harmonious chords haven't flowed through the windows in a long time. No family members warm themselves in front of the marble and stone fireplace. The grandfather clock keeps time for no one and the chandelier bears cobwebs. A few china teacups wait for ladies in hats to gather. The floors are uneven and one room has no floor. Bare studs are everywhere and the floor joists are rotted.

The 70ish lady on the porch with a younger version of herself turned out to be Ottis Teresa Williams with her youngest daughter, Tammy. She had a vibrant smile, sparkling eyes, and an unbreakable spirit. She proudly announced that she is 92 years of age! She and Tammy have lived in a rented home nearby waiting to return to the pink house. They come each day to take care of the dogs but they can't live in the house, due to the utter devastation.



Ottis Teresa and Tammy in kitchen



Open floor at Ottis' house

Ottis and her husband had a young daughter when he enlisted in the Navy in WW II. When he returned from the war, they bought this house and it was probably 50 years old at the time. She recounted proudly how they had filled the house with children after his return. Ottis had Tammy the same year that her firstborn had her own first child. That daughter is now 70. Ottis had a life of giving. She volunteered at the church and made band costumes for many years.

It is our time to give to Ottis Teresa and her family. It is a daunting task that will begin on February 18. Their hope is tempered with disappointment. They gave an electrician \$8,000, and he skipped with the money. Look for updates on this project.



Jeff Gibbons evaluating Ottis' house