

# THE LANCASTER GENERAL HOSPITAL: FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

## PREFATORY NOTE

A complete history of the Lancaster General Hospital has not been written, due in part to the unfortunate fact that many of the early records are not extant. What is here presented is not even to be considered as a full and complete account. Rather, it is an outline of the first quarter century of hospital history which may possibly serve as a guide to some future historian. In the preparation of this record, the writer acknowledges his indebtedness to the late Hugh R. Fulton, Esq. who left some notes relating to the early years of the hospital. Also, we are indebted to the Lancaster newspapers, issues of 1893-1918.

In this year of 1958, another major expansion program will be completed at the hospital. Therefore, it is particularly germane to look back through the years and review the modest start of an institution, which after countless "trials and tribulations" is now firmly established as one of the most important adjuncts to the physical well-being of the citizens of Lancaster County.<sup>1</sup>

## THE BEGINNING

Sixty-five years have gone by since June 15, 1893, when fifty people met in the old Y.M.C.A. building on South Queen Street and began a series of discussions which led to the formation of the Lancaster General Hospital. Various patriotic and fraternal orders had been invited to send representatives to this meeting and responding to the call were members of the Junior American Mechanics, Red Men, Knights of the Golden Eagle, Patriotic Order Sons of America, Grand Army of the Republic, Young Men's Christian Association and Knights of Malta.

Called to order by Reuben Bertzfield, the convention quickly selected as permanent chairman, the Rev. Mr. W. D. Bicksler, who is credited with having laid the ground work for the movement. The Rev. Mr. Bicksler at the time was pastor of the Salem Church of the Evangelical Association on North Water Street between Orange and Chestnut Streets. Called to the chair, he stated that the object of the meeting was to discuss "plans for establishing another hospital, such being a necessity with the increase of population and by reason of the fact that St. Joseph's Hospital and the County Hospital were overcrowded most of the time."

Election of officers resulted as follows: Rev. Mr. Bicksler, president; Dr. C. Elvin Haupt, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, first vice-president; H. J. Gundaker, second vice-president; Hugh R. Fulton, Esq., secretary. The president, first vice-president, secretary and Dr. H. D. Knight, a dentist, were named a committee to secure the cooperation of the churches and secret societies. Also at this first meeting a committee, with Mr. Bertzfield as chairman, was selected to formulate plans and devise ways and means to obtain money for the building of a hospital. The newspaper report of the proceedings closed with the confident note that "it is believed the hospital is an assured fact and active work will begin at once."

Another meeting of the forward looking citizens with sixty present was held on June 30. Mr. Bertzfield of the previously appointed committee recommended rental of a suitable building and its conversion into a hospital, which would of course be of a temporary nature. However, seventy-six year old Dr. Emanuel V. Gerhart, revered seminary professor and one time president of Franklin College, favored the purchasing of ground and erecting a permanent building at once. Dr. C. H. Levy, Rabbi of Shaarai Shomayim (then located at the corner of East Orange and North Christian Streets) agreed with this viewpoint and suggested "A small model building to be erected at once and which could be enlarged as occasion required." The group present apparently was not ready at the time to come to a decision on the important question of a building, but progress was indicated by the naming of two committees.

The following men made up the finance committee: J. F. Mentzer, Harry Metzger, J. G. Goodman, A. S. Vilee, J. W. Hollman, George E. Wisner and Dr. Haupt. To plan for a permanent organization and write a constitution, the Rev. Mr. Bicksler was appointed chairman of a committee which included Dr. J. H. Dubbs, Professor of History at the college; Hugh R. Fulton, Esq.; John Bechtold; F. S. Hoak; Dr. H. D. Knight and the Rev. Mr. J. H. Esterline, pastor of the Church of God congregation.

At a subsequent meeting twenty-four men were elected to constitute the first Board of Directors; and in this group of men was vested full authority for the proper maintenance of the hospital. Provision was made that any individual or organization contributing the sum of five dollars or more annually would be entitled to one vote at future elections.

September 23, 1893 — three months and nine days after the first meeting of the progenitors of a new hospital for Lancaster — the newspapers announced that a charter had been granted on that day by the courts to the Lancaster General Hospital. Established to the extent now of having a charter and a board of directors of twenty-four leading citizens of city and county, it became imperative that a suitable location be found for the new institution. To this end, two more committees

were formed. One was instructed to secure a site on which to build a hospital. To the other committee was given the task of finding a temporary building in which a hospital could be immediately established.

Included on the original Board of Directors were these citizens of city and county: Reuben Bertzfield, Henry S. Williamson, George E. Wisner, John W. Holman, Hon. David McMullen, Charles A. Fon Dersmith, Hon. Marriott Brosius, Hon. A. Herr Smith, J. Fred Sener, Dr. H. D. Knight, J. W. B. Bausman, John D. Skiles, Samuel M. Myers, Rev. Mr. W. D. Bicksler, Rev. Dr. Joseph H. Dubbs, Hugh R. Fulton, Esq., Rev. Dr. C. E. Haupt, all of Lancaster city; Dr. John Brubaker, Rohrerstown; Hon. H. Burd Cassel, Marietta; John S. Gleim, Lancaster Township; Samuel Seldomridge, Farmersville; Hon. John H. Landis, Manor Township; Hon. Hugh M. North, Columbia; and George W. Hensel, Quarryville.

The first officers under the charter were:

Hon. David McMullen, President

Dr. H. D. Knight, Vice President

Hugh R. Fulton, Esq., Secretary.

Charles R. FonDersmith, Treasurer<sup>3</sup>

## THE OPENING OF THE FIRST HOSPITAL BUILDING

In a building still standing at 322 North Queen Street, the General Hospital began its existence and opened its doors to receive the first patient on December 19, 1893. The committee which had been charged with the task of procuring quarters for a temporary hospital had acted speedily and rented the Queen Street building from John Holman for \$100 annually. It was a humble beginning and perhaps did not offer much in appointments and services according to present day standards. However, the officers and directors were alive to the situation and were even then looking ahead and planning to either purchase a suitable property which could be converted into a hospital or to build.

Provided in the first quarters of the hospital were seven rooms and one ward for patients, an operating room, rooms for the chief nurse and matron, office and living space for the superintendent and a reception room. Selected to be the first superintendent was the Rev. Mr. Bicksler, who had done such notable work in bringing to fruition the plans for a hospital. In charge of nursing service at the time of opening was Miss Carrie Reinicke, "A trained nurse from the University of Pennsylvania." Shortly thereafter, Miss Sarah A. Outlaw, was engaged and given the title of "chief nurse."

From a staff, consisting of four surgeons and four physicians, four teams were selected, each to serve the hospital for a period of three months. The surgical staff included Dr. M. L. Herr, Dr. George R. Welchans, Dr. S. T. Davis, Dr. J. W. Houston. The physicians on the staff were Dr. D. Frank Kline, Dr. Walter Boardman, Dr. C. E. Netscher, Dr. D. W. McCormick. It is of record also that Dr. J. C. Detwiler and Dr. J. A. E. Reed rendered services during the first year.

Rules and regulations provided that "no distinction will be made in the reception or treatment on account of creed, race, nationality or sex. All ward patients will be treated alike, whether they pay or not. Patients able to pay are expected to do so. Visitors will be admitted daily 2 to 4, except Sunday."

With the opening of the hospital, gifts of money and provisions poured into the institution from individuals and churches in all sections of the county as well as the city. In fact, from a reading of the lists of contributions then published periodically in the newspapers, it appears that the grocery bill for the hospital was lightened substantially by the gifts of canned fruits and fresh vegetables. The Ladies Auxiliary was organized the first year and raised \$382. Its officers were Mrs. E. K. Young, President; Mrs. D. R. Saylor, Vice President; Mrs. R. Bertzfield, Secretary; and Mrs. Sarah Poist, Treasurer.

In the first year of the hospital's existence, fifty-three patients were admitted. In the second year, the number was sixty-five, of which number 42 were medical and 23 were surgical cases. This is learned from a report given at the second annual meeting of the Board of Directors and contributors held in Grace Lutheran Church on October 31, 1895. Reuben Bertzfield was then acting superintendent and Miss Anna Lantz was in charge of nursing. Although the nursing school of the hospital was not established until 1903, it is a matter of record that in 1895, "Miss Lantz was in charge of the training school with two student nurses." The cost of maintenance of the hospital for the year 1895 was \$2,272.

The Lancaster General Hospital continued in the temporary quarters on North Queen Street until April 1896 in which month a recently purchased property at 530 and 532 North Lime Street became the second home of the hospital.

### THE HOSPITAL AT 530-532 NORTH LIME STREET

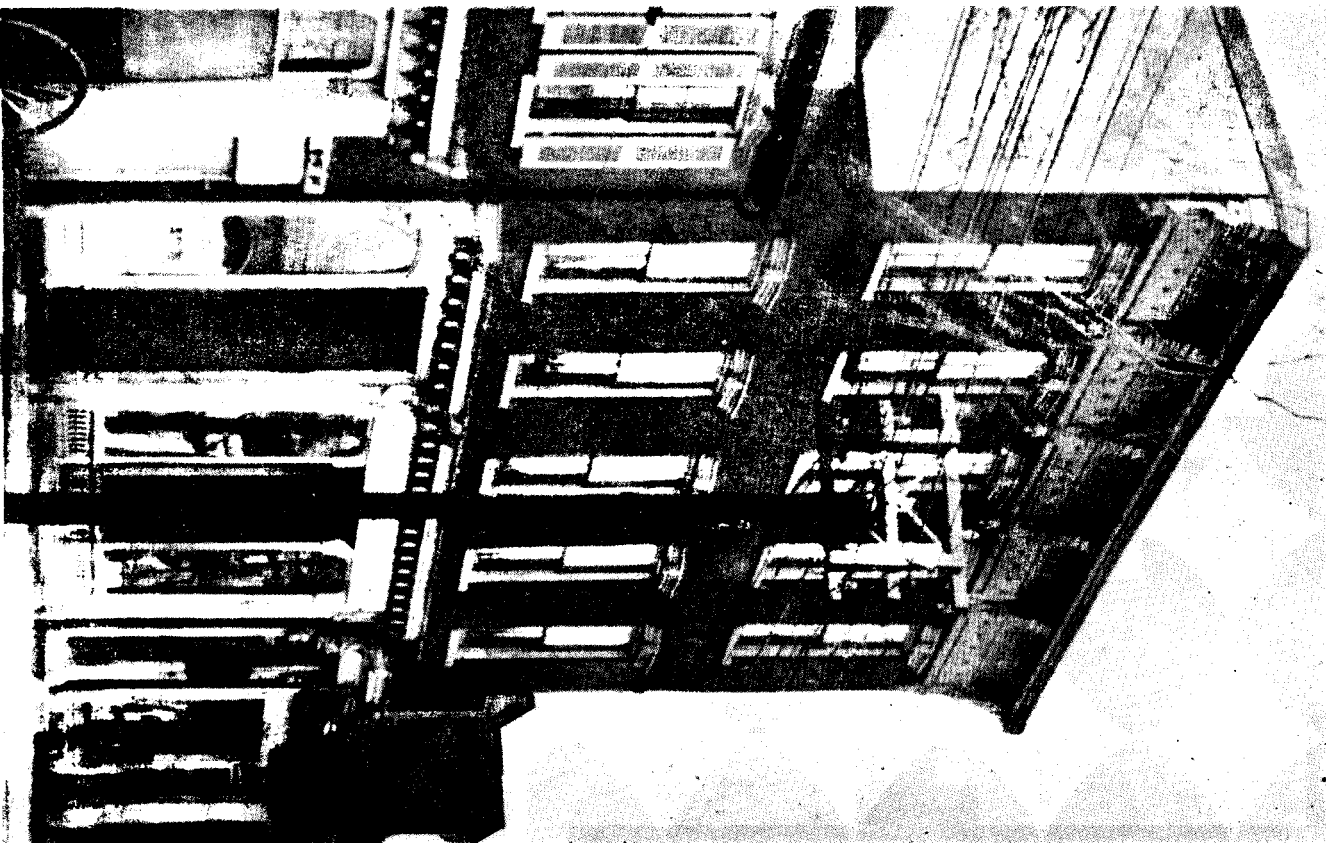
At a meeting of the Board of the General Hospital on September 25, 1895, it was agreed that Hugh R. Fulton, Esq., secretary, be instructed to purchase the Ezra F. Landis property at Nos. 530 and 532 North Lime Street, at a sum not to exceed \$13,500. Mr. Fulton was able to get the property for \$12,500 and on April 1, 1896, a deed for the same was turned over to the board.

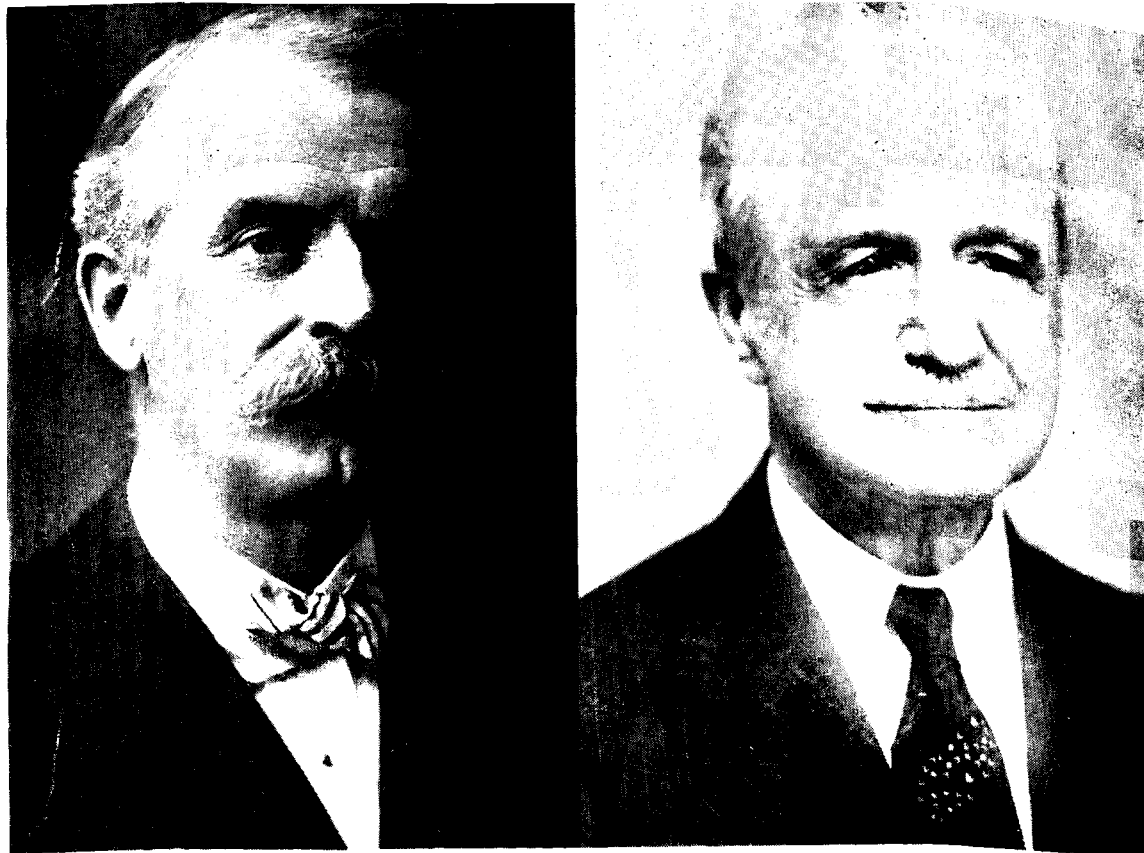
The management of the hospital had been diligently looking for a suitable site for the permanent location of the institution and in selecting the Lime Street property, they believed that they had selected "the finest, most convenient and suitable for the purpose in the city." Also, at the same time the Executive Committee had been visiting hospitals in Harrisburg and Philadelphia and they came back with a report that "an accident or emergency hospital should be located as near the center of a city as possible to make it of quick access for those suddenly taken ill or wounded by accident."

Therefore, in purchasing the Lime Street property, it was felt that all the qualifications were met and in addition "it would be within convenient distance of the Pennsylvania Railroad station (then at North Queen and Chestnut Streets), the Reading Railroad passenger station (then on Prince Street north of James), and the Pennsylvania short cut." Further, "it would provide a rear entrance on Cherry Street for the use of ambulances." The property itself consisted of a large 3 story double

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**First home of the Lancaster General Hospital at 322 North Queen Street.  
This structure was the hospital from December 1893 until April 1896.**





(Left) Hon. David McMullen, first president of the hospital. Born in Penn Township, 1844. Died in Lancaster, 1919. (Right) The Rev. Mr. W. D. Bicksler, first superintendent of the hospital.

Photo courtesy Lancaster General Hospital  
Department of Public Relations

brick mansion with parlors and large rooms which would be suitable for wards without any alterations and sufficient chambers for private patients. In fact, so few changes were necessary that the hospital was prepared to admit patients in the month of April, 1896.

Before the building was actually purchased, the matter of financing the project provided considerable discussion. One plan to raise money, which was adopted but apparently not used, was that the ground should be purchased by selling tickets to contributors at one dollar per foot of ground, the tickets to be issued in denominations of one, two, five or ten dollars. Instead, "a mortgage to secure 5% bonds for \$10,000 was placed upon the property and the bonds were sold in three days, before the ink was dry." This information we have from the recollections of Mr. Hugh Fulton, who was a member of the board of directors for a full quarter of a century.

On January 11, 1897, the executive committee of the board, looking forward to providing even better hospital facilities for Lancaster city and county, was given the authority to confer with an architect and procure tentative plans for a complete hospital building. However, this did not mean any speedy change, for the General Hospital continued at 530-532 North Lime Street with but few changes to the buildings until 1902.



Original permanent quarters of the hospital at 530-532 North Lime Street. Gentleman at left front is Dr. J. C. Detwiler.

Photo courtesy Lancaster General Hospital  
Department of Public Relations

Annual reports of corporations do not generally provide entertaining reading but to know the story of the General Hospital, one must turn to the annual reports of the institution as they appeared in the newspapers. Especially is this true of the closing years of the last century and the early years of the twentieth century. Printed reports for that period were prepared and distributed by Rev. C. E. Haupt, but none appear to be extant. For this reason, we need to depend on the newspapers for information.

Held either in Grace Lutheran Church or the Y.M.C.A., the annual meetings of those years had, as presiding officer, the very civic minded attorney and former judge, the Honorable David McMullen, President of the Board of the Hospital

From Mr. McMullen's reports, we can learn important facts concerning the development of the hospital. A few examples will suffice. In 1898 a dispensary was begun and in 1899 additional wards were erected and a garbage furnace was purchased. In 1901 Miss A. K. Mueller was elected as chief nurse and her sister, Mrs. M. Rinck, was made housekeeper. At one annual meeting, discussion centered around the maintenance of shedding for the physician's horses.

However, one problem above all others which always caused much discussion was the matter of financing the hospital and of interesting the people of Lancaster in the cause of the institution. At the meeting of 1899, the statement was made that "while the hospital has done excellent work with the means at its command, the additional demands on the hospital require more contributions of money during the coming year from the people of Lancaster." At another meeting, a report stated that "the contributions were so small that to the directors it appears as though the citizens seem to forget that the hospital exists." The report for the year ending October 1, 1901, showed receipts of \$6,974.23 for the year and expenditures of \$6,996.28, leaving a deficit of \$22.05. Since the beginning of the hospital, efforts had been put forth to have the State appropriate to the hospital and eventually the Commonwealth did grant an appropriation.

### NORTH WING CONSTRUCTED

Lancasterians probably were apathetic in their treatment of the hospital, but this did not daunt the Board of Directors for they went ahead steadily with plans to build a complete hospital on a site immediately to the north of 530-532 North Lime Street. As architect they engaged Cassius Emlen Urban, native Lancaster Countian and designer of many of the city's finest public buildings. On June 9, 1902, Mr. Urban presented plans to the board which provided for a building with north and south wings and a central administration wing, making possible the construction of one wing at a time. The plans were accepted as drawn and a contract to build the north wing was awarded on July 23, to C. Samuel Flick for \$19,997.

Arrangements were made to break ground on August 15, 1902, and the directors agreed that it would be done without ceremony. However, some folks had a different idea, for on the day of ground breaking, kindly Reverend Haupt, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church and a staunch advocate of the hospital since its inception, was on hand and offered a prayer. Superintendent of Lancaster City Schools, Dr. H. K. Buehrle, who was chairman of the building committee, was also there and with a spade, which had been presented by the hardware firm of "Marshall and Rengier," turned the first ground and thus began the building of the General Hospital as we know it today.

Certainly the most encouraging news for the hospital management in 1902 was a message from Harrisburg to the effect that the General Assembly had appropriated \$30,000 to the institution, which broken down meant \$20,000 for construction and \$10,000 toward two years maintenance costs. The directors obligated themselves to match this appropriation with \$30,000, and to this end engaged a man to solicit substantial gifts. At the same time, the small contributor was not overlooked, for we read that "Collection Globes were deposited at prominent places throughout the city and county and anyone wishing to have one can secure it from Dr. C. Elvin Haupt." With the above notice appeared another one stating that "Farmers who have produce left over from market are solicited to give it to the hospital."



By November 23, 1902, the basement of the new building had been excavated and the supporting joists for the first floor were in place; and on that day the cornerstone was laid "in the presence of an immense crowd of spectators." Lending great interest to the occasion was the attendance of many members of the two Masonic Lodges in Lancaster—Lodge 43 and Lamberton Lodge 476—who arrived on the scene accompanied by the renowned Burger's Band. To the Masonic Order had been given the honor of laying the cornerstone according to the ancient rites and ceremonies of the order.

Boards were laid temporarily over the first floor joists and here were seated the members of the Lancaster High School Orchestra and the High School Student Chorus, together with the Masons and speakers. The exercises opened with the singing of Haydn's "The Heavens Are Telling," after which Dr. H. K. Buehrle, master of ceremonies, presented the Reverend E. C. Griffiths, D.D., pastor of the First Methodist Church, who offered prayer and read the scripture (Luke 10:25-37). Addresses by Reverend Stuart Cramer of the First Reformed Congregation and Rabbi Isidore Rosenthal of Temple Shaarai Shomayim followed.

For the impressive ceremony of laying the cornerstone, John W. Lansinger, Right Worshipful Grand Master of the Masonic Order by dispensation, was the presiding officer. To Mr. Lansinger, Deputy Grand Master William H. Keller (attorney and eventually a judge of the Superior Court of Pennsylvania), presented the Honorable David McMullen, President of the Hospital, who stated that everything was in readiness for the laying of the stone. Various articles were placed in the stone after which Deputy Grand Master Keller inspected it and found it "plumb, level and true." Dr. Buehrle then presented C. Emlen Urban to Grand Master Lansinger who handed to the architect the plans for the building and the tools for its erection. With further meaningful ritual, the stone was sealed and the Grand Master declared it "Duly laid according to Free Masonry, and may the Great Architect of Heaven and Earth bless and prosper the work." Grand Chaplain for the ceremony was the Reverend Emil Meister of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church.

Owing to an early and unusually severe winter and also to various strikes among mechanics, work was delayed on the north wing so that it was not completed for occupancy until October 15, 1903. With its completion, a laboratory for the first time became an adjunct of the hospital, the equipment for the same having been presented by a member of the board. For the first time too, a resident physician in the person of Dr. Albert L. Henry was appointed.

One Lancaster physician of this day who remembers well the development of the General Hospital in these early years is Dr. Charles P. Stahr, who first became a member of the staff in charge of the dispensary and out-patients in 1901, and has served the institution in many capacities since that time.

October 1903, the month that the north wing was opened, coincided with the tenth anniversary of the hospital, and the report read at the tenth annual meeting gives us an interesting sidelight on the major disease of that day. Of 361 medical patients, 261 were typhoid cases. There were 184 operations performed, 23 of them being appendectomies. Two hundred and twenty-three (223) dispensary patients were cared for and 403 "outside visits to patients" were reported. There were 34 X-ray treatments.



Nurses, student nurses and internes of the hospital in 1907. Front row, l. to r., Anna Barr; Dr. Kelty; Miss Vierdorfer, Head Nurse; Mary Degler; Mattie Gast; and Mary R. Shiffer. Second row, Alice Shultz; Nora Wissler, Mary Haverstick; Miss Bear; Mary Overdeer; Sue Brunner; Miss Kauffman; Cordelia Shoop; Susan Weidle; and Carrie Willard. Third row, Dr. Brumbaugh; Miss Nichols; Miss Wanzell; and Miss Miller, Superintendent of Nursing.

Photo courtesy Lancaster General Hospital  
Department of Public Relations

### CENTRAL WING ERECTED

Before the north wing was finished, it became apparent with the great demands on the institution that the central administration wing was an urgent necessity. Therefore, without pausing to properly dedicate the building, the construction project went forward until the central wing was completed in the fall of 1905 at a cost of \$22,697.

Then came the time for a day of celebration, and Thanksgiving Day, 1905 was selected as the day on which the hospital would be dedicated. Let us briefly review the program of that day.

On November 30, 1905 at 10 a.m. the doors of the finished building were thrown open for public inspection and at three in the afternoon the dedication exercises opened with music by Walter G. Bahn, pianist, and John B. Roth, violinist. Dr. Haupt, "one of the earliest members of the Board of Directors, read appropriate selected portions of scriptures relating to the care of the sick." On behalf of the building committee, Dr. Buehrle presented "the beautiful building with all its appointments" to the Board. Judge McMullen, in accepting the building, "re-

ferred to the peculiar appropriateness of opening and dedicating this edifice on a day of public Thanksgiving." A "fervent prayer of dedication" was offered by Professor John S. Stahr, D.D., LL.D. (father of Dr. Charles P. Stahr), President of Franklin and Marshall College. Dr. Haupt led the audience in the singing of "Now Thank We All Our God," and Dr. Gerhard of the Seminary closed the program with the benediction.

On December 11, 1905, the Board, which since the beginning of the hospital had met in the office of Judge McMullen, met for the first time in the chapel in the basement of the new building. After thanking Judge McMullen for the use of his office as a meeting place for so many years, they voted to float a loan to pay for the completion of the hospital.

With occupancy of the new building, the 3 story home, which had housed the hospital since 1896, was razed and the directors were faced with the next building project — the erection of the south wing in accordance with the architect's plans.

### **SOUTH WING OF THE HOSPITAL IS COMPLETED**

On Monday, October 3, 1910, not quite five years after the formal dedication of the north and central wings of the hospital, the south or women's wing was completed and opened with simple dedicatory exercises. Also on this same day the Board of the Hospital together with the contributors (who were invited to all annual meetings) met in their 17th annual session to listen to reports and elect new members. We will first therefore consider the proceedings of the board meeting.

The Lancaster Morning News reported the meeting as follows: "President McMullen was in the chair and Secretary Fulton was in his accustomed place. Rev. C. Elvin Haupt offered prayer. The report of A. P. Schnader, Treasurer, showed that receipts during the year were \$27,749.72 and that \$27,315.28 was expended to run the institution in the same period. The report of Miss Clara B. Schmehl, Superintendent, showed patients during the year 1,058, cured 871, improved 19, deaths 73 (eleven patients not accounted for), paid patients 271, partly paid 140, charity patients 685, operations 605, dispensary patients 531, dispensary operations 101. The sixteen auxiliaries of the institution made reports of the work done by them during the year, which were of a very encouraging nature and showed contributions of produce, food, wearing apparel, bedding, linens and money."

At the program of dedication, which was held in the women's medical ward, Bishop Abraham B. Herr of the Mennonite Church offered prayer and Rev. C. E. Haupt read the same verses of Scripture which had been used by Dr. Griffiths at the cornerstone laying in 1902. Dr. Charles P. Stahr of the Medical Staff spoke in place of Medical Director Dr. T. B. Appel, who was attending a convention of the State Medical Society, of which organization he was president. Dr. Stahr emphasized the well-equipped features of the institution and commented favorably on the work of the faithful Board of Directors. Miss Schmehl also addressed the gathering, stressing the importance of the nursing school and proposed that "the next step in progress at the hospital be the building of a good home for the nurses." At this time thirty young ladies were intraining. Mrs. M. B. Rohrer of the Strasburg Auxiliary appeared on the program as the representative of all the auxiliaries who had a major part in the building of the women's wing, actually contributing more than \$5000.

Professor H. K. Buehrle, Ph.D., Chairman of the Building Committee, in turning over the new addition to the Board, was in a reminiscent mood and said, "From an old brick building on North Queen Street to this magnificent pile in sixteen years seems almost like a fairy tale." He recited the many advantages of the completed hospital and its appointments, closing with an announcement that "a species of treatment was provided at the eleventh hour by the installation of a Turkish bath as complete as could be installed at a cost of \$3000."

Honorable David McMullen, like Professor Buehrle, was thinking too of the past history of the hospital and in accepting the building, he recalled that "seventeen years ago in the parlors of the old Fountain Inn (later renamed the Lincoln Hotel) on South Queen Street, a meeting of a number of gentlemen was held in reference to starting a hospital." This gathering must have been the prelude to the public meeting later in the old Y.M.C.A. Mr. McMullen spoke at length of the need of a home for nurses and "on behalf of the Board of Directors" stated that they would make every effort to have the home erected. The dedication program closed with a prayer and the benediction by Rev. George Israel Browne, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church.

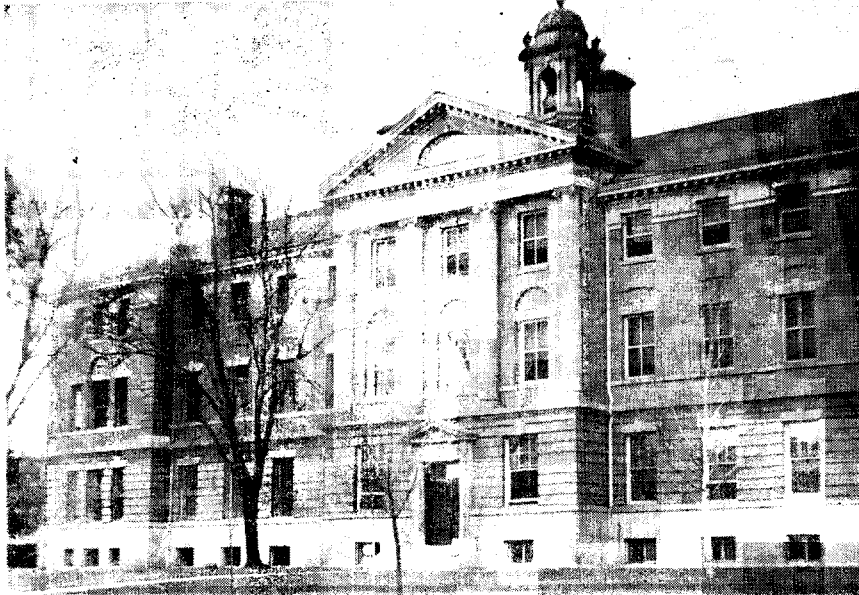
Built by Herman Wohlsen, Contractor, the women's wing as finished measured 70 by 140 feet and thus completed the original Lime Street front of the institution as planned by Architect C. Emlen Urban. The cost of this latest addition was \$90,000, exceeding by thousands of dollars the rest of the building. The debt remaining on the entire building was more than \$60,000.

The members of the Board of the General Hospital at this period of its history were E. M. Cohn, Rev. Dr. C. Elvin Haupt, Paul Heine, Senator John G. Homsher, Dr. H. D. Knight, J. C. Schutte, Dr. William C. Schaeffer, Hugh R. Fulton, Esq., M. T. Garvin, John W. Holman, F. Fred Sener, George E. Wisner, Professor R. K. Buehrle, Lanius B. Keiper, Hon. John H. Landis, Hon. David McMullen, Albert P. Schnader, Charles C. Schulerth, I. Haines Dickinson, Walter M. Franklin, Esq., John A. Goll, Frank L. Krauskop, J. Harry Rathfon, William Wohlsen.

### THE NURSES' HOME BECOMES A REALITY

When President McMullen in October 1910 stated that the Board of Directors would make every effort to have a home for nurses erected, he was not engaging in idle talk, for no time was lost in proceeding toward the desired end. At the January 1911 meeting of the board, announcement was made that an architect in the person of Charles Elvin Haupt, Jr., of Washington, D. C., had been engaged to prepare plans and specifications for a nurses' residence. He was the son of Rev. C. E. Haupt, D.D., whose devoted interest in the hospital has already been referred to.

Due to several factors, the erection of a separate building for nurses had become an urgent necessity. First, the steady increase in the number of patients forced the nurses out of their quarters in the hospital to rooms in private homes in the neighborhood. Also, the developing importance of the School of Nursing demanded more space. In June 1911, the eighth class of nurses was graduated from the school at exercises held in the Martin Auditorium, followed by a reception at the Iris Club. The class that year numbered eight, of which number, two in later years held the place of Superintendent of Nurses at the General Hospital. They were Miss S. Margaret Smith and Miss Sarah E. Reinhart.



Lime Street facade of the Lancaster General Hospital in 1910.

Photo courtesy Lancaster General Hospital  
Department of Public Relations

Concerning the increase of patients, the report at the annual meeting in 1911 tells the story very well. For the year then ending, there were 1,719 patients, 1,021 operations, 630 dispensary patients, and 147 dispensary operations. Typhoid was still prevalent as witnessed by 71 cases.

The hospital definitely was filling a need for Lancaster city and county and was rendering service alike to those without financial means as well as to those who were able to pay for medical and surgical attention. Still, the Board of Directors was beset with financial difficulties. This is the fiscal statement for October 1911:

Floating Debt .....	\$ 2,076.51
Bonded Debt .....	20,000.00
Loans from Banks .....	50,000.00
Mortgage Loans .....	1,500.00
	<hr/>
	\$73,576.51

In June 1911, ground was broken for the Home for Nurses and then it was that substantial gifts began to come to the hospital. Mrs. Morris Bachman of Sharon gave an outright gift of \$10,000, as did Mr. and Mrs. Israel Shreiner, who gave \$8,000. Bequests for endowments came from Miss C. H. Long, E. H. Hershey, A. K. Herr, Aaron B. Stoner, Miss Mary L. Baer and C. S. Foltz. The newspaper report

of the time also mentioned the following who were "especially liberal" toward the hospital: Mr. and Mrs. Herman Wohlsen, Henry Heisley, Miss Mary H. Hager, Mrs. John W. Appel, Walter C. Hager, Mr. and Mrs. John F. Goll, Mr. and Mrs. D. F. Buchmiller, Mr. and Mrs. S. F. Frey, Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Cohn, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Heine, Mr. and Mrs. H. S. Williamson and daughters. From the state government came an appropriation of \$15,000 toward the erection of the home.

The naming of the nurses' home came about in this manner. Mr. Charles A. FonDersmith, Civil War veteran, distinguished banker, and active Lutheran layman (Holy Trinity) was one of the original members of the hospital executive committee and at times served as treasurer. He died in 1909 at his home, 540 North Duke Street, and in January of 1912, Mrs. FonDersmith offered to the hospital \$15,000 toward the completion of the home. At once, the board by resolution decided "in appreciation of the remembrance of the distinguished service of the donor's late husband to name the home THE CHARLES ALLEN FON DERSMITH NURSES' HOME."

Another offer which was deeply appreciated came from board member Honorable John H. Landis (then Superintendent of the Mint in Philadelphia). He announced that he would pay the insurance on the new home and continue to do so annually.

As the completion of the home drew nigh and the indebtedness of the corporation climbed, realization came that the fiscal situation had to be faced more realistically. Accordingly, \$90,000 in bonds bearing 4½% interest were issued and offered to the public. Almost immediately bonds to the value of \$45,000 were sold to investors.

On Monday, October 7, 1912, the nurses' home was ready for occupancy and opened on that day with a short service of dedication. Dr. J. S. Stahr pronounced the invocation, there was some vocal music, and after a eulogy on Mr. FonDersmith by Mr. M. T. Garvin, a dedicatory prayer was given by Rev. J. E. Whittaker, D.D., pastor of the donor. In the eulogy, Mr. Garvin stated "When Mr. FonDersmith's last illness was upon him and he was unable to leave his bed, the plans for this building, we dedicate today as a house of nurses, lay near his bedside and were frequently and with much interest contemplated by him." In this manner we are informed that the plans for the home were on paper and in the hands of board members for study several years before definite announcement was made that the home would be built.

When erected, the nurses' home stood on the original north wing of the Lime Street building and on the site now occupied by the Maternity Wing. In 1912 there was a vacant lot between the home and Frederick Street and extending west to Cherry Street. This was owned by Herman Wohlsen, who, at this period of hospital history, sold the lot to the hospital for the same amount that it had cost him. Eventually, the home was moved intact to this location, but surely at the time the hospital acquired the lot, there was no thought of such a moving in the future.

With the Nurses' Home finished and occupied, the next great need was a service building and laundry. To that end, the board engaged Mr. Charles E. Haupt, Jr., in December 1912 to prepare plans for such a building.

## HOSPITAL HAPPENINGS 1913-1915

Upon the completion of the Nurses' Home, there followed several years of financial difficulties which demanded the strictest kind of housekeeping. At the same time, there was greater evidence of liberality on the part of citizens than at any time since the beginning of the institution. Let us then look at the record of hospital events in the years 1913-1915.

**APRIL 1913**—Miss Wardell, graduate of the Presbyterian Hospital of Philadelphia and at present Superintendent of the Columbia Hospital, was elected to succeed Miss Clara B. Schmell as Superintendent of Nurses.

Miss D. E. B. Grubb presented \$5000 to endow a bed in memory of her deceased brother, Charles.

Kirk Johnson presented a chapel organ and a piano for the use of religious services held in the hospital.

**JUNE 1913**—Ten nurses were graduated from the School of Nursing. Lieutenant Governor John M. Reynolds, native of Lancaster County, delivered an address to the graduates.

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1913**—The big day at the Lancaster Fair and Tag Day for the hospital at the Fair and throughout the city.

**JANUARY 1914**—"At a meeting of the directors of the hospital, it was announced that the hospital is deep in debt and the directors are working hard to find a way out."

**FEBRUARY 1914**—"Treasurer W. J. Neuhauser was authorized to make a temporary loan to meet the bills which are due." The household expenses and wages during the month amounted to \$1,794, divided among 46 employees. Dr T. B. Appel presented to the treasurer a check for \$625, "contributed by various members of the medical profession."

**APRIL 1914**—Mr. Peter T. Watt offered to be one of 50 men and women to subscribe \$1000 each towards the liquidation of the hospital debt.

Newly appointed field secretary Robert W. Reiber reported that ten industries began a system whereby employees contributed 10 cents or more per month toward the maintenance of the hospital.

F. K. Sener at his own expense was given authority to make a children's playground on the hospital lot (where the Nurses' Home now stands).

**MAY 1914**—Eight nurses were graduated from the School of Nursing and addressed by Sumner V. Hosterman, Esq.

**JUNE 1914**—"It was the consensus of opinion that a service building and laundry should be begun at once but lack of funds stands in the way of immediate action."

**JULY 28, 1914**—World War I began.

**SEPTEMBER 1, 1914**—Dr. Frank H. Hartman strongly urged the hospital to immediately purchase imported instruments and drugs as the price is "being lifted skyward because of the European War."

**OCTOBER 1914**—At the annual meeting, Dr. R. K. Buehrle discussed the need for a Maternity Hospital. The Board approved a plan for the auxiliaries to create a special fund to start a movement looking to that end.

The annual report told of 5,645 patients treated between July 1, 1913 and July 1, 1914. Expenditures for the same period were \$73,600.

It was further reported that eighty industries had arranged for employees to contribute monthly to the hospital, and that \$3000 had been raised from this source. President McMullen announced a gift of \$5000 from the late J. J. Sprenger.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1914**—Donation Day for the hospital. More than 300 boys and girls made a house to house canvass with contribution boxes. \$1700 was turned in at the end of that day.

**DECEMBER 1914**—The Rev. C. Elvin Haupt, chairman of the printing committee, presented the 21st annual report of the hospital. "The book contained 58 pages."

**FEBRUARY 1915**—Dr. Park P. Breneman presented the urgent necessity of a new X-ray machine to replace the one which had been in use for ten years. He stated that the cost would be about \$1000, but "unless some philanthropist donated the money, it cannot be purchased."

**MARCH 1915**—Miss Elizabeth Armstrong donated \$1400 to the hospital to purchase a new X-ray machine.

**JULY 5, 1915**—Enroute by rail to the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, the famous Liberty Bell was viewed by thousands of Lancastrians, when the special train made stops at three points in Lancaster. Following the departure of the Liberty Bell Special, a parade was formed which had as its destination the lawn of the General Hospital, where a flagpole, presented by the patriotic societies of Lancaster, was dedicated with impressive ceremonies. A daughter of Dr. S. H. Heller "pulled the cord which released the bird of peace," and "hundreds of children under the baton of Miss Margaret Humphreville rang out the first verse of the Star Spangled Banner, accompanied by the bands." Captain John C. Fiero had charge of the program which included the presentation speech by Hon. Frank S. Groff and the address of acceptance by Hon. David McMullen. The speeches were made from the steps of the Nurses Home.

**NOVEMBER 1915**—Rev. B. F. Alleman, D.D., Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, presented a dental chair to the hospital.

### **THE 1916 CAMPAIGN FOR \$250,000**

The year 1916 was a year of rumors of a war, for it was in that year that our nation came close to actual conflict with Mexico, and the following year—1917—saw the United States entering the European War—now called World War I—on the side of the Allies. In this same period the management of the General Hospital made the first major appeal for funds in its history, and, as a result, the institution showed notable progress. Following are some of the highlights of hospital history against a backdrop of war in the years 1916-17.

**JANUARY 1916**—"A special meeting of the board was held at which all sorts of plans were presented relative to the proposed campaign for funds to liquidate the indebtedness of the institution."

Miss Emma C. Taylor of Philadelphia was elected superintendent of nurses to succeed Miss Lillian F. Wardell, who had resigned. "Miss Taylor is a graduate of the Polyclinic Hospital of Philadelphia and comes highly recommended by Dr. John M. Deaver," said the Lancaster New Era, and to those of this generation it may be explained that Dr. Deaver was a native of Drumore Township in Lancaster County and at that time a leading surgeon in Philadelphia.





Horse drawn ambulance of the hospital about 1907. Driver is "Teddy" Powell, and to his left is Dr. Kelty, an interne.

Photo courtesy Lancaster General Hospital  
Department of Public Relations

FEBRUARY 1916—On recommendation of Dr. T. B. Appel, decision was made to elect a technician and Miss Isabella Byerly was chosen for the position.

MARCH 1916—Plans for a laundry building were submitted by Samuel P. Slaymaker, who stated that a considerable portion of funds needed had been procured through the efforts of the Women's Auxiliaries. Erection was to be started in a short time, as the need was pressing, laundry bills at that time amounting to more than \$100 weekly.

JUNE 1916—This day marked the opening of the largest "money getting campaign" in the history of Lancaster up to that time. The daily papers of that day tell us that "nearly 300 of the real live wires of business and professional life in the city and county gathered at Hotel Brunswick to give the Lancaster General Hospital **quarter-million dollars** campaign a rousing send-off. At five o'clock, the bells of the city churches pealed out their silvery tones and active solicitation began at once." At the Hotel Brunswick meeting merchant Milton T. Garvin, who had recently been elected chairman of the board, presided and introduced the Reverend Robert McGowan, D.D., eloquent pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, who delivered the keynote address. Said Doctor McGowan in closing, "I ask in the name of Christ and humanity that this thing will succeed." James Shand, co-founder of the Watt and Shand Store, spurred the canvassers to activity with this statement, "I have been ashamed that Lancaster city and county which has more than 48 national banks and has bank deposits greater than any of 12 entire states in the Union, maintains an institution such as the General Hospital under an indebtedness as it is now laboring under."

JUNE 13, 1916—The quarter-million dollar campaign closed with the goal still to be reached. At the closing meeting, it was announced that \$210,000 had been raised in cash and pledges, payable in two years. Again Mr. Shand rose in the meeting and electrified the audience when he said, "The honor of the city and county is at stake and it would be a disgrace upon the fair name of Lancaster if

the amount is not subscribed." Enthusiasm seized the crowd and they decided to go on.

To Edwin B. Searles, 562 West Chestnut Street, we are indebted for additional facts related to the campaign of 1916. The campaign had as director, Mr. F. Herbert Wells, of Dayton, Ohio, who about that time formed the Wells Organization, credited today as being the largest fund-raising organization in the world. Mr. Searles was appointed captain of a team which selected Donegal Township as its district; and when all reports were in, Donegal led all the townships in contributions. As a token of their excellent work, Mr. Searles' team was presented with a silk flag which they immediately presented to Mr. Garvin "in recognition of his superb leadership." After 42 years, Mr. Searles can still say, "Truly it was an inspiring campaign and all participating were stimulated and uplifted by it."

**JUNE 26, 1916**—From the first contributions which came in as a result of the campaign, \$25,000 in loans from banks were canceled.

Leaves of absence were granted to Dr. S. H. Heller and Dr. C. P. Stahr, who as members of the Pennsylvania National Guard were called into active duty and joined the punitive expedition under General John J. Pershing on the Mexican border. Cause of the disturbance was Pancho Villa, Mexican bandit and politician, who had made a foray into the town of Columbus, New Mexico, killing American soldiers and citizens. The punitive expedition failed in its purpose when the established Mexican government showed its disfavor of American troops in Mexico.

**AUGUST 1916**—A breakdown of the campaign contributions showed that the total number of contributors was 6,802. Of this number 4,556 paid in cash or pledges \$5 or more, while 2,246 contributed less than five dollars each.

Henry B. Keiper, who built and lived in the home now occupied by the Mary Sachs store, presented a motor-driven ambulance to the hospital, and promised to keep it in repair during his lifetime. This was the first motorized ambulance owned by the institution and all concerned agreed with the New Era comment that "this will prove a blessing to both the hospital management and to the patient as it will insure prompt service and at much greater comfort than the horse drawn vehicle now in use."

**SEPTEMBER 1916**—The number of nurses was increased to fifty.

**DECEMBER 1916**—"Decision to take action to prevent the free treatment of persons who are able to pay for the same was one of the important items decided upon at the monthly meeting of the board. Reports showed that the expenses incurred by the treatment of charity patients during the past month were greater than the amount of money on hand."

**JANUARY 1917**—President Garvin was asked to use his influence toward instilling a feeling of friendship and cooperation between the workers of the General Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital.

**FEBRUARY 1917**—Physicians and surgeons of the hospital were feted at Hotel Brunswick by the Board of Directors. Special guests were Richard M. Reilly, president of the board of St. Joseph's Hospital, and Dr. N. E. Bitzer and Dr. E. T. Prizer of the staff of the same institution.

**APRIL 16, 1917**—The United States declared war against the Central Powers. At once, the General Hospital offered all its facilities to the government for the care of the wounded.

JUNE 1917—Everyone this year was asked to grow vegetables in order that we might have food for ourselves and for our allies. The Hospital subscribed to the idea and planted their lot on the corner of Lime and Frederick Streets in potatoes. B. Frank Barr contributed 8 bushels of seed potatoes and S. R. Slaymaker gave the use of a potato planter.

JUNE 4, 1917—The annual meeting of members of the board was held and all persons who contributed \$5 or more to the hospital were invited to attend. Report for the year June 1916 to June 1917 showed 2,298 patients admitted and cared for. Receipts for the year were \$61,312, disbursements \$78,172, again leaving a deficit. It was reported that the new laundry had been completed at a cost of \$18,000.

JUNE 7, 1917—A class of 12 graduate nurses was addressed by Dr. George G. Ross of Philadelphia, who said, "You, who are about to receive your diplomas tonight, could not find a nobler cause in which to work than in the service of the nation; and I urge those of you who have no personal obligation to offer your services to the Red Cross."<sup>3</sup>

AUGUST 1917—Owing to the increased growth in the business of the hospital, a manager was deemed advisable. William Breitingler, of Harrisburg, was the first one to hold this position.

### FIRE ENDANGERS THE HOSPITAL

On the night of Wednesday, August 23, 1917, a fire which destroyed the box factory of J. Frank Bowman on Cherry Street, north of James Street, caused great concern for the welfare of patients in the hospital close by. At one time the cornice of the Mennonite Church was on fire, and all through the night firemen and military personnel kept a wary eye on the General Hospital building.

Weeks before this, a Sanitary Train had been organized and recruited under the leadership of Major S. H. Heller, of the medical staff of the hospital, and on the grounds of the box factory, adjacent to the hospital, Major Heller had erected two tents for sick soldiers. Upon the outbreak of the fire and after the tents had been removed to another location, six men from the Sanitary Train were detailed to patrol the roof of the hospital to see that no sparks from the burning factory would endanger the institution. Major Heller and Captain James N. Lightner of Co. K, 4th Regiment, Pennsylvania National Guard, which unit had been mobilized in July, remained on the scene until all danger was past. Also answering the emergency call was the ambulance of St. Joseph's Hospital, which remained at the General Hospital until it was definitely known that patients would not need to be moved.

Following the fire, President Garvin immediately recommended the purchase of the box factory to prevent the future erection of any manufacturing plant so close to the hospital. A special fund of \$15,000 was accumulated to buy the property, and thus another piece of land was added to the hospital grounds.

September 10, 1917, the last of Lancaster's organized military forces left for Camp Hancock near Augusta, Georgia. Included were the 4th Pennsylvania Infantry under Colonel Edward C. Shannon, the 4th Regiment Sanitary Detachment under Major Heller and Ambulance Company No. 3 (later known as No. 111) under 1st Lieutenant Charles P. Stahr.

One month after the departure of Lancaster's own military units, came the annual election of the staff of the hospital. On motion of Dr. Frank G. Hartman,

the entire staff, including the physicians then in active military service were re-elected. By the end of the year, a service flag unfurled at the hospital bore ten stars. Altogether, thirty-five physicians from city and county served under the colors in World War I.

Important in the life of the hospital were these happenings in the fall of 1917:

**OCTOBER**—The newly built and equipped laundry was put in operation.

**NOVEMBER**—Miss Nina Smith, "who is a Canadian woman," was elected Director of Nurses, succeeding Miss Edna Taylor.

### **THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY**

With the nation pressing its military effort in Europe, consequently making demands on American hospitals, and with the entire home front and all institutions of healing harassed by a major epidemic, the year 1918 proved to be the busiest year of the Lancaster General Hospital to that time.

In the very beginning of the year, acting on a suggestion from the government, decision was reached to give young ladies a three months' course of training to prepare them as assistant nurses. "However, the directors did not encourage the move, as in their judgment a course of three years' training is the proper time required to qualify a nurse for her important station in life." To accommodate any who might take this course, twenty-four additional couchbeds were placed in the nurses' home.

Actuated by facts revealed after a study of conditions in the homes of charity patients, the Board established a Social Service Department in May. At a meeting when the subject was fully discussed and action was taken, "a number of men who attended agreed to donate a large part of the salary of the Social Service Worker so that none of the regular income of the hospital would be expended for her salary." Mrs. Boyd Maxwell, first Social Service Worker of the hospital, began her duties in July 1918.

May was the month of the second Red Cross War Fund campaign. In Lancaster County, which was asked to raise \$200,000, the campaign got off to a glorious start on May 19 with a gigantic city parade, in which 10,000 people participated, led by Chief Marshal John M. Groff. "In the line of march were fifty-six nurses and pupil nurses in charge of Miss Nina Smith, Superintendent of Nurses, and twenty-two of the Staff headed by Dr. Frank G. Hartman, Acting Medical Chief. The student nurses formed a red cross, and the unit carried a service flag with seven stars." Always alert to the war-time requests of the nation, it may be said that physicians, nurses and Board members met and accepted every challenge to the facilities of the institution. In June, the Board passed a resolution that "all surgery which was intended to prepare men for the Army and Navy shall be free to all recruits and drafted men."

The autumn of 1918 saw the entire world visited by one of the most tragic epidemics in modern times. Commonly called Spanish Influenza, because the first cases were reported from Spain, it struck Lancaster County in September, overcrowding the General Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital with sick and dying, necessitating the opening of an emergency hospital, and taxing physicians and nurses almost beyond human endurance. The women of the Red Cross organization who had been engaged in knitting garments for soldiers and sailors were put to the

task of making gauze influenza masks for nurses in local hospitals. As an indication of the extent of the disease, the City Board of Health, which met every day during the epidemic, reported on a single day (October 7) 2516 cases. In the month of October, 103 deaths were reported from the Lancaster General Hospital, of which 88 were in the Receiving Ward. In December, when the epidemic had abated, the City Board of Health through its Chairman Charles G. Baker, Esq., requested that thanks be given to Dr. J. S. Plant, House Physician; Dr. Hartman, Chief of Staff; and Dr. John L. Atlee, "for their excellent services rendered at the emergency hospital during the epidemic."

Truly, the year 1918 was one of untold world-wide misery and suffering, but towards year's end came that great day of rejoicing. It was November 11 when an armistice brought to an end the war in Europe, which in the nineteen months that the United States had been a participant, took a toll of 198,059 American lives.

December 19, 1918 marked twenty-five years since the Lancaster General Hospital received its first patients in a temporary building on North Queen Street. As the management took stock of its present situation and reflected on the struggles to maintain the institution, there was great satisfaction in the fact that whole-hearted community support had eventually resulted. In this twenty-fifth year, the hospital had been greatly favored with donations from the County Auxiliaries and from the City Auxiliary which had realized \$1,253 from a home-talent play entitled "Out Somewhere." Various churches throughout the county had presented offerings received at Thanksgiving services, while substantial donations of canned fruit and vegetables had come from the King's Daughters and Sunday School classes. The Needlework Guild had come forward with underclothing, bed linens, and children's wear. All this help, plus bequests from thoughtful Lancastrians, made it possible for the hospital to finish its twenty-fifth year with all bills paid and a balance in the bank. Yet, the time was not ripe for enlarging the hospital, although the need for more room was apparent. The Board decided "that the time for undertaking the new building is not yet opportune owing to the high cost of building material and labor charges."

Hugh R. Fulton, Esq., who was one of the founders of the hospital, called attention of the Board to the fact that twenty-five years had elapsed since the beginning of the institution, and he expressed the thought that the anniversary was worthy of a celebration. Accordingly, in recognition of the event, on January 23, 1919 the Board of Directors tendered a banquet to the Staff of the hospital at the Stevens House. President of the Board, Mr. Landis Levan, the third man to serve as President, introduced Mr. F. L. Suter as toastmaster, who presented Judge David McMullen, faithful first President of the Board. He was followed in his remarks by the Reverend C. Elvin Haupt, D.D., who responded to the toast "The Religious Mission of the Hospital." Mr. Fulton then gave "an exhaustive history of the hospital through its twenty-five years of existence." Mr. M. T. Garvin, second man to serve as President, "drew a striking contrast between past and present conditions, dwelling on the pressing need of the hospital as the community expands." Dr. Frank G. Hartman, Acting Medical Director, responded to the toast "As the Staff Sees It" and pointed out the scope of the work of the institution, "declaring that the public at large has little idea of the large field covered by the work." Lastly, Dr. John L. Atlee spoke and "dwelt on the efficiency of the institution and empha-

sized the need for another operating room.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, quietly and without ostentation, twenty-five years of medical and surgical service to county and city were marked by the Board and Staff of the Lancaster General Hospital.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> These articles are reprinted from the "L. G. H. Echo" where they appeared serially August 1957 - July 1958.

<sup>2</sup> Four men of this original board continued as directors during the first 25 years of the life of the hospital. They were David McMullen, Hugh R. Fulton, Rev. C. E. Haupt, John H. Landis.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. George Ross, Chief Surgeon of the Methodist Hospital in Philadelphia, joined the Navy in the summer of 1917 as Chief Surgeon of Navy Base Hospital No. 5. The writer of this sketch served as a pharmacist's mate in this same unit.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. John L. Atlee, third of the name to practice medicine and surgery in Lancaster, was first elected to the staff of the General Hospital as consulting surgeon in 1911.