

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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MYRA COON, HOSPITAL FOUNDER



Considering that March is Women's History Month, it is only right that we acknowledge the role Myra Coon Gordon played in establishing what was to later become Medina Memorial Hospital.

According to Ed Grinnell's new book, "The first known hospital in Medina, which was comparable perhaps to a present day nursing home, was at 505 South Academy". In the Tribune of October 6, 1904, a Mrs. A. R. Borton had purchased the Moone house and was remodeling it for a hospital. A few years later the Tribune had reported that this hospital was "discontinued due to the retirement of the founder..."

It was in February 1907 that Miss Myra A. Coon established a hospital at 525 South Academy. This came about because of the death of her brother, Dr. Mortimer Coon in 1905, a young physician who died of a ruptured appendix. This event emphasized to her the desperate need for a hospital in Medina. Since she was a trained nurse, she was even more inspired to do something. We must remember that in those days surgery was performed in the doctor's office, in the sick person's home or you had to travel to a Buffalo Hospital.

Because of a very generous gift from an anonymous doner, Miss Coon named her hospital "Mary Louise Hospital". In 1908 the hospital had

moved to the Ward House at the corner of Park and Prospect Streets which is now a vacant lot. Here surgery was performed by Buffalo surgeons who came by train when called by local physicians. Soon a nursing and kitchen staff developed. Early in 1908 a group of women was organized to help and to raise money to build a new hospital. This was known as the Medina Women's Hospital Association. By November 1908 Miss Coon had indicated that she wanted to relinquish her hold on the Mary Louise Hospital and encouraged new hands to take over her venture in community health service. If I read correctly between the lines, Miss Coon wanted to perform nursing care rather than be an administrator and bookkeeper. The Medina Hospital Corp. had been organized on April 23, 1908. In March 1910 they agreed to purchase the old Swett House at the northwest corner of Eagle and Prospect streets for a hospital. When it opened, Myra Coon became the head nurse with one assistant and a cook.

Rooms were \$3.00 per day or \$20.00 per week. It was during this period of time that Myra Coon married Frederick Gordon of Chicago. Her valiant efforts and dedication formed the nucleus of what was to become modern health care in Orleans County, through the Medina Memorial Hospital today.