

Rethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin • County Historian



Photo Courtesy of Marcia Hart

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AGMH

Building Through The Years - Part 3

Beginning as far back as 1860 serious discussion began concerning the establishment of a public hospital in Albion, but it was not until 1892 that any proposition crystallized. It was then when a group of public-spirited ladies organized the Albion Hospital Association and conducted a Fair and Art Exhibition which aroused interest and produced a fund of several hundred dollars. However, that's as far as it went for two decades while the money remained in the hands of Mrs. Emma Hart Fessenden, the treasurer, who eventually presented it to the Gregory Hospital.

In 1912 Arnold Gregory (1826-1916) a retired farmer living in the western part of Albion Township announced that he would establish a hospital for Albion and the vicinity. Aside from himself, he named the people he felt should be its incorporators and first directors whose names are as follows: Judson Curtis, Isaac Signor, Lafayette Beach, A. M. Eddy, J. R. McGregor, Charles Bidleman, Elizabeth K. Hart, Helen A. Burrows, Ezra T. Coann homestead and A. W. Woods. Arnold Gregory then purchased the for a hospital and gave the corporation \$30,000 in securities for reconstruction. The whole interior was changed and a three-story addition was built by Mrs. Emma Reed Nelson Webster as a memorial to her parents. An operating room addition was built through the generosity of George M. Waterman as a memorial to his late wife and the cost of finishing other major parts was contributed by Miss Julia Barker as a memorial to her deceased brother. With these sizable donations an eleven bed Arnold Gregory Hospital first opened to the public Sept. 12, 1916 just eight months after its founder's death, a project he had hoped to see completed in his lifetime. Thus the first Arnold Gregory Hospital building became a working reality through the philanthropy of a few individuals. But through the years countless persons have continued to financially support this life-death institution. It is by no means unusual to be asked to contribute to a fund-raising campaign. No only has money been needed but a strong force of volunteers has been a mainstay of the hospital for decades. The untold hours of help by Gray Ladies, Twigs, Emergency Squad Volunteers, Candy Strippers, In-Service Volunteers and now COVA are indispensable.

Of these, the largest volunteer group is the Association of Twigs which was established in 1925. The photo shown here was taken in 1965 at the annual Twig banquet which honored the 40-year members at that time. Seated from left to right are Bea Burrows, Pauline Anderson, Elizabeth Wilcox, Katherine Clarke and Dorothy Blake. Standing is Blanch Larwood Mason, Marguerite Harding, Dr. Dorothy Cooper, Helen Woods, Laura Lyman, Bess Brown and Anne Clarke. With the annual Twig Christmas Shop just around the corner it is appropriate to end this series of AGMH stories with the ladies as it was the ladies eighty-eight years ago who made the first real inroad for a hospital.