

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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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, Schuyler Hazard and A.W. Woods. Arnold Gregory then purchased the Ezra T. Coann homestead on South Main Street for \$8,000 to be remodeled 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 institution. Not 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 COVA are indescribable. Of these, the largest volunteer group is the Association of Twigs which was established in 1925.

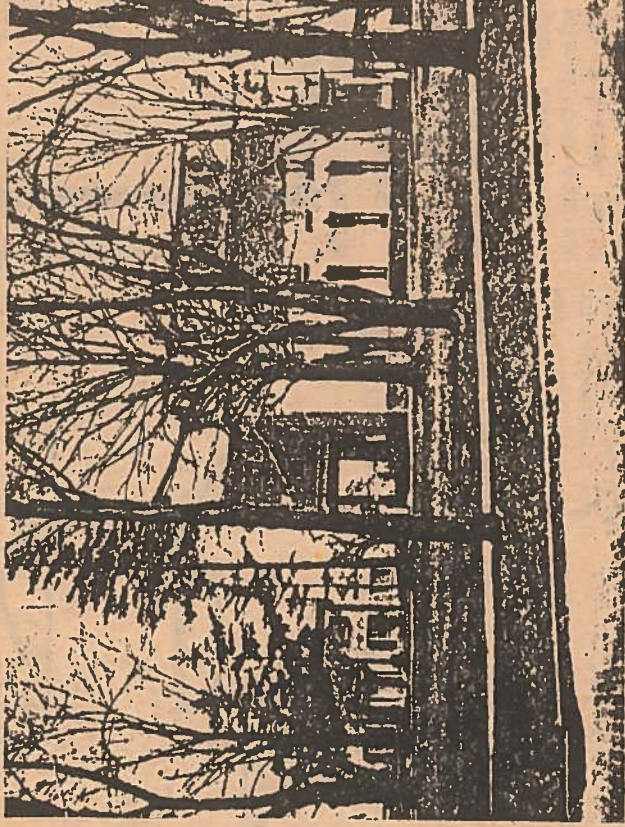
On March 19, 1923 at a meeting of the Board of Directors, a letter signed by the six children of George L. Burrows of Saginaw, Michigan was read offering to finance the building of a nurses Home to serve the hospital as a memorial to their father. George L. Burrows, a native of Albion, left the area as a young man to successfully make his career in Michigan. On May 28, 1924 the cornerstone was laid for the George L. Burrows Nurses Home located near the old hospital. Built of yellow brick, this building stands today adjacent to the COVA headquarters.

On October 29, 1950 the cornerstone of the present hospital was laid and on January 28, 1952 patients were transferred from the old one. Although he did not live to see this all take place it would have been a dream-come-true for Lynn M. Burrows, President of the Board from 1929 until his death in 1944. For it was he who first recognized the need and made real efforts to achieve a new building. In March of 1941 through his direction a building fund was set aside starting at \$5,000. With the able leadership of his successor, Edward B. Archbald and the backing of the entire community, the first part of the present hospital became a reality with 51 beds at a total cost of \$650,000.

However, by 1965 it became apparent that additional space and equipment was necessary to continue the ultimate in hospital services. A matching campaign goal of \$360,000 was more than reached against a two million dollar addition which was dedicated November 15, 1969 as the Dr. David Cooper Memorial Wing. With that addition the number of beds was practically doubled and thus Arnold Gregory Memorial Hospital became the first "all electric" hospital in the state.

During the mid-1970's the Oak Orchard Health Center wing was added through a Federally Funded Project. It was first occupied in May 1977.

The accompanying photo with this article is from a 1930's post card view of the Arnold Gregory Memorial Hospital. At the extreme left we can see the George L. Burrows Nurses Home. Upon completion of the new hospital building in 1952, the one shown here was razed. Its site is now used for parking.



HOSPITAL AND NURSES HOME, ALBION, N. Y.

Now in its 75th year, the hospital is engaged in a fund-raising campaign to expand and improve various phases of hospital care.