

TERRELL STATE HOSPITAL

HISTORICAL

On February 16, 1883, the Eighteenth Legislature of Texas enacted a statute providing for a "Branch Asylum for the Insane". At that time there was in Texas only one Institution for this class of unfortunates, the State Lunatic Asylum at Austin, established in 1860. The legislative act provided that the branch should be in North Texas and not less than one hundred and fifty miles from Austin. It further provided that Governor John Ireland should appoint a committee of three citizens to select and purchase a site. The commission was directed by the act to keep in view accessibility, fertility of soil, water supply and healthfulness of the community.

The commission, thus empowered, after due deliberation and inspection, purchased six hundred and forty acres of land one mile East of Terrell, and said purchase and location, of course, fully complying with the provisions of the act. The sum of \$20,000.00 was appropriated for the payment of said land and for the erection of the initial buildings.

In further pursuance of the provisions of said act, Governor Ireland at once appointed a Board of Managers consisting of J.S. Grinnan, John S. Griffith, S.A. Shortridge, J.H. Muckelroy, and R.M. McClung. On June 8, 1883, the Board held its first meeting and with Dr. D.R. Wallace as Superintendent, and the new institution, destined to experience a wonderful growth and expansion, was fairly launched.

The Legislative act provided no official name but states that the institution was to be a "Branch of the State Lunatic Asylum". For several years it was designated as "North Texas Lunatic Asylum". By act of a later Legislature, the official title was made "North Texas Hospital for Insane". Finally, the 39th. Legislature, for obvious reasons abolished the words "Lunatic" and "Insane" from the title to all institutions for the care and treatment of the mentally diseased and gave this plant its legal title, "Terrell State Hospital".

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Each biennial session of the Legislature has made appropriations not only for maintenance of the Hospital, but for buildings to accommodate the growth and to advance the efficiency. There is now an administration building, the central portion of which is four stories and modern in every particular, completed in 1928. Branching off from said central administration building are sixteen wards, eight for males and eight for females. There is a substantial infirmary for each sex. Four additional annexes have been erected, two for males and two for females. A brick building houses the laundry and another the main kitchen. An X-Ray and Dental building is ample and modern. A brick ice factory and cold-storage plant is in operation (This has recently been rebuilt and placed in connection with main power plant). The central power plant is a brick (laundry with considerable new equipment has also been placed in connection with Power plant). An up-to-date Junior Hospital for surgical and acute cases was built recently. A tubercular cottage houses eighteen patients at present, an indispensable provision for those afflicted with tubercular disease since it has been definitely determined that this disease is infectious.

A substantial brick ware-house is situated on a spur of the Southern Pacific Railway, formerly the Texas Midland, running into the grounds. For convenience of the night employees, a two story home is maintained. Two dairy barns, one brick and one frame, house something like one hundred and fifty cows. A modern milk house of brick is maintained, where approximately two hundred gallons of milk a day are cared for. It is fully equipped with separators, churns, and coolers. A mattress factory has been in operation for some years and in 1920, it turned out 4220 mattresses and pillows. A Chapel was erected some years ago at a cost of \$20,000.00. A suitable home was built for the Superintendent and family near the main building. There is now in course of construction a new ward building to cost \$125,000.00, fire proof and of brick and tile with concrete porches and altogether the last work in hospital wards. (Feb. 1935: there has been erected a most attractive and comfortable Male Infirmary now being occupied, and at this time a new Female Ward building is under construction, to be by far the most complete ward building erected). 1937- at this time an attractive and comfortable male ward building, nearing completion, also a new female ward building under construction.

More than two hundred and fifty acres of land are in cultivation, sixty acres being in garden and orchard. Vegetables, berries, fruits, cotton, corn, hay, and silage for two large silos, are grown. The value of the products from farm and garden run from ten to twenty thousand dollars per year, varying with the character of the crop season.

The inventory of the State property here as given in the report on the Board of Control in 1920, places a valuation of \$128,000.00 on the land, \$692,000.00 as value of improvements, \$265,000.00 as value of equipment, and \$18,000.00 as value of live-stock. The grand total of value of property here was \$1,177,000.00. Since 1921, several new buildings have been erected, and the value of the plant to-day is about a million and a half dollars.

BOARDS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

In addition to the first Board of Managers already named, the following citizens of Texas have served in said capacity up to date 1919 when the Board of Control Act abolished this office:

H.T. Nash, M. Cartwright, G.J. Clar, O.B. Colquitt, B.H. Scott, J.B. Porter, Nester Morrow, S.E. Waskom, D.G. McKeller, J.K. Bumpas, G.E. Kelly, James Young, A.H. Ables, W.A. Brooks, A.J. Childress, John H. Terrell, B.L. Gill, F.D. Thompson, M.G. Goss, Eli W. Gaffey, Walter Adams, John E. Owens, J.B. Porter, J.H. Reeves, R.C. Goodman, A.U. Puckett, J.C. Lyons, C.C. Bennett, J.S. Grinnan Jr., A.R. Andrews, T.B. Griffith, Virgil Haynie, W.C. Porter, and J.E. Thomas.

The superintendents have been Dr. D.R. Wallace, from 1885 to 1890; Dr. John Preston from 1890 to 1895; Dr. C.M. Rosser from 1895 to 1897; Dr. D.L. Gillard from 1897 to 1899; Dr. J.T. Wilson from 1899 to 1900; Dr. John S. Turner from 1900 to 1906; Dr. C.L. Gregory from 1906 to 1911; Dr. George F. Powell from 1911 to present time.

POPULATION

The hospital was opened for patients in July 1885. It may be mentioned as a tribute to the healthfulness of the location and care given patients, that one patient is still here who came in the opening months and another who came at the opening died in May 1929. In October 1885, the report of Dr. Wallace showed 112 patients. The number grew rapidly reaching 600 in 1891, 844 in 1897. In 1899 it passed the thousand mark, and in 1906 the fifteen hundred mark.

The population at this time (March 1934) is 2199 present in wards and 336 on furlough and escape and subject to return without legal process. The officers and employees number 283. Up to August 21, 1934 there had been admitted all told 15,989. To-day, 2-15-37, in hospital 1154 males, 1358 females, total 2512, with 401 out on furlough and escape, making a total of 2913. There has been admitted in all a total of 17,312.

LIFE OF PATIENTS

The State Hospitals of Texas are maintained not only for the care of the insane but for the cure as well. Such a methodical routine of daily life must be followed as is most conducive to the improvement of the patient. At 5:30 the rising bell rings and every patient able to be up must rise and dress. The feeble and ill patients, domiciled mainly in the infirmaries, are not subject to the rules as to rising and retiring. Beds must be made and halls swept.

Twice each day when the weather is favorable, patients are taken to the parks and spend a couple of hours in the open. Out-door air and sunshine are antidotes for disease and relieve the monotony of Ward life. Amusements, exercise, a salutary effect on the mentally indisposed, and indoor games are encouraged. One a week, a picture show is given in the Chapel and in the winter months, a dance each week is provided. Practically all the patients are accustomed to an outdoor life. A majority of them come from the farms. They are permitted to do such work as they are able to handle and many of them readily become efficient in the laundry, dairy, kitchen, and out on the farm and garden. A sewing room attracts many women and with some employed help it has turned out thirty thousand garments per year. Probably three fourths of the labor is performed by inmates. Such services is entirely voluntary, no labor being required.

The character and amount of reading done by patients would be surprising to those who have not observed them. Many of them take out cards in the Local library and use them admirably and in intelligent selections. Newspapers and magazines are provided and conversation of the topics of the day is common on the wards.

Church services are held each Sunday afternoon and the order observed and the attention given is fairly comparable with that at similar gatherings elsewhere. The choir is composed mainly of inmates and instrumental music by patients is a feature.

The discipline of the hospital is in line with the best thought and experience of the day in similar institutions of the country. The largest amount of liberty compatible with the patient's safety is allowed. Mechanical restraints are used only in such extreme cases where safety compels it. Their use then is restricted by requiring requisition and order from responsible officer.

WATER SUPPLY

Of prime importance to a populous institution of this kind is the water supply. In its early history considerable difficulty along this line was encountered. There are now three wells of depths of 200, 2500, and 3397 feet respectively, from which a sufficient supply for present need is obtained. One of these deep wells produces a mineral water rich in Sodium Chloride (Common salt) and Sodium Sulphide (Glaubers Salts) and is of natural temperature warm enough for bathing purposes in coldest weather. The stand pipes of steel are on the grounds, one for mineral water and the other for fresh. Both hot and cold water are constantly supplied to all wards. (This mineral well has recently become clogged and closed.)

FOOD

A well balanced ration is supplied to all inmates and the bill of fare is prepared by a competent dietitian and submitted in advance to the Board of Control. All food is carefully inspected and the kitchens are equipped with modern utensils. A special bill is always prepared for the sick and infirm. The dairy is at present supplying about two hundred gallons of milk, always the chief item of food for the sick. The bakery daily converts 1500 pounds of flour into light bread, biscuits, and rolls. Four hundred gallons of coffee are made per day but patients are encouraged to drink milk rather than tea or coffee.

TREATMENT AND RESULTS

Up to August 31, 1934, there had been admitted to the hospital, 15,909 patients, of these there had been discharged as restored 5,851, and discharged as improved, 1,681. There had died 5,357 and transferred to other hospitals totaled 228. On account of the destruction of a dormitory, it was necessary to transfer 100 to Wichita Falls and 58 negroes to Rusk, in 1928. The per-centage of restorations during fifty years of the hospital's life is 36.52% of total admissions. The percentages of discharges, including restored and improved is 47.25% of total admissions.

As far as the writer has been able to secure statistics, this is substantially above the average of restorations and discharges in similar institutions of the country.

COST OF MAINTENANCE

The Hospital is supported by Legislative appropriations. The management has kept it well within the amounts allotted by the various Legislatures, only two deficiency appropriations ever being requested. The per capita cost varies of course, as prices on the items needed for maintenance vary and fluctuate. As the character of food served and accommodations given is improved, the per capita cost may be increased and it may be not always to an institution's credit that its cost of maintenance is low. The motto of all our eleemosynary institutions should be "The best care for the least money".

The average per capita cost of maintenance during the fifty years of the hospital's history has been \$15.06 per month. In 1896 it reached the lowest figure \$8.57. Just after the World War, naturally, it reached the highest figure as labor and food then commanded the highest prices for fifty years of our history.
