Weston Hospital

1858
Weston Hospital, now moving through its greatest period of development, cherishes a strong heritage of care and service to the mentally ill in West Virginia. As you review our history in the following passages, we invite you to become an advocate for those with mental illness. By working together toward the future, we can provide the most therapeutic treatment for those in need of mental health care.
THE PERFECT LOCATION

What to do with people suffering from mental illness? This is a question in the minds of many throughout the world. Early in the 1800’s most persons declared “insane” were confined to jails, prisons, or the poor houses. Others were locked in a room or in out buildings around the countryside. Restraints were commonly used. Clothing for these unfortunate people was often considered unnecessary. The inhumanity shown to these men, women and children was unbelievable.

A move to provide a clean, quiet environment for the mentally ill was begun and hospitals started to appear throughout the world. The United States of America saw the need and, largely due to the efforts of Miss Dorothea Dix, Lunatic Asylums were established in many states. Virginia had two such hospitals by the 1850’s located at Williamsburg and Staunton.

However, these two institutions did not provide care for those west of the Allegheny Mountains. The Virginia Legislature voted to establish a new hospital to serve the “insane” in this remote section of Virginia and, on March 22, 1858, the Lunatic Asylum West of the Allegheny’s was born.

His Excellency Henry A. Wise, Governor of Virginia, appointed three commissioners: Thomas S. Wallace of Petersburg, Dr. Clement R. Harris of Culpepper, and Samuel T. Walker of Rockingham. These distinguished gentlemen visited several communities including Fayetteville and Weston looking for the most appropriate area in accordance with the prescribed treatment of the time.

When they arrived in the sleepy little village of Weston they were greeted by a brass band with A. A. Lewis and the Sons of Temperance. About 1,000 school children led a parade to the proposed site for the hospital.

All the houses and business establishments were newly whitewashed. Fences, sidewalks, and streets were in
excellent repair. Another plus for the proposed site was its positioning by the West Fork of the Monongahela. Additionally, the area being considered was felt to be extremely healthy. The Commissioners decided the perfect location would be in Lewis County, Virginia.

A Board of Directors was appointed. Members were Minter Bailey, President, J. D. Camden, Clerk, John Brannon, R. J. McCandlish, George J. Arnold, James T. Jackson, William A. Arnold, Calab Boggess, and Joseph C. Spalding. Their first duty was to purchase land. The first acquisition was 269 acres at a cost of $9,809.12 ($36.47 per acre). The land included an ample supply of spring and river water and coal.

Dr. Thomas S. Kirkbride of Pennsylvania and Francis T. Striblin from Virginia were contacted and, with their expertise in the treatment of the mentally impaired, a plan for the state of the art facility was soon drawn. The capacity of the facility was to be 250 patients.

R. Snowden Andrews was selected as architect. Mr. Andrews' proposed structure was projected to cost $253,000. The necessary heating and ventilation apparatus plus the engine house, exercise yards, and enclosures brought this total to $395,000.

Work began immediately. While ground preparation was going on at the site, building materials were being acquired. Prisoners were brought in to quarry stone and make bricks. A block house to hold and accommodate these men was one of the first structures to be erected. The grounds became a small working community with a sawmill and brick ovens. All necessary building materials were prepared on the scene. The stone, the finest blue sandstone, was quarried in Harrison County at Mount Clare and transported to Weston by ox drawn wagon. This excellent quality stone was easily worked with a hammer and chisel.

June 28, 1861, the Board of Directors noted the one-story southern wing was under roof. The interior could be completed during the winter months. However, Vir-
ginia seceded from the Union on April 17, 1861 - the Civil War was underway. Construction was halted and did not continue until after the conflict was resolved. In 1863 the portion of Virginia West of the Allegheny's separated from the mother state and formed what is now West Virginia. The partially completed hospital was the only structure West Virginia received from the State of Virginia.

A new Board of Directors was appointed by His Excel­lency A. I. Boreman, Governor of West Virginia. These gentlemen met on the first day of January 1864. The first item of business addressed by this distinguished group was to change the name of the institution to West Virginia Hospital for the Insane. Arrangements were then made to proceed with completion of the section under roof and ready it for patients.

Dr. Ralph Hills of the Central Ohio Lunatic Asylum was appointed as Superintendent and Mrs. Hills as Matron in August of that year. On October 22, 1864 the institution opened its doors with nine (9) patients. Dr. W. B. Barnes was appointed as Assistant Superintendent in November. A maximum of forty-five (45) patients could be accommodated, although this would be exceeding planned capacity.

One interesting delay in receiving patients, as related in the annual report for the year 1864, involves delivery of necessary bedding and linens.

It seems a raid was made by the Confederates into Weston in September and all hospital blankets and sheets were stolen. A new purchase was promptly made, but these were destroyed in transit from Baltimore, again by members of the Confederate Army. As a result of these actions, three shipments had to be paid for in order to have an order on hand for the opening of the new hospital.
II

A CITY WITHIN ITSELF

The first patients had barely arrived when plans were being set in motion to make the facility completely self-sufficient. Gardens were being planned as well as stocking animals for milk, butter and meat.

1866 found the institution well on its way to being a city within itself.

The barn was a model for the future and even had running water. A boiler house was erected and the laundry was nearly complete. All clothing, most furniture, and even the mattresses were made on the grounds using patient labor (an important part of the treatment plan). Population stood at 82 with 40 males and 42 females. “Pleasure” grounds were designed and fenced for inmates protection.

Diagnoses included Dementia - Melancholias, Acute Mania and Chronic Mania. Some supposed causes were: Hereditary, Domestic Trouble, The War, Disappointed Mate, Religious Excitement and Measles.

Construction continued to progress with the four-story center section and the three-story southern section going up together. The year of 1877 found this portion of the enormous undertaking complete.

The number of persons residing in the hospital October 1, 1877 was 417 (192 females & 225 males). The average daily cost for maintaining these patients was $2.38.

The northern two sections were constructed as rapidly as possible. However, it was 1881 before this work was finally completed.

While construction in the main building progressed, other structures appeared on the grounds behind the main facade. (A list of buildings, the date they were erected, and the architect are in the appendix.)

The name of the hospital was changed from the West Virginia Hospital for the Insane to Weston State Hospital in 1913. The mid-1970's saw the word “State” dropped and the facility is now known as Weston Hospital.
Weston Hospital is the largest hand-cut stone building in the United States. It measures nearly one quarter mile across the front. To walk all the wards would involve a total of two and one-half miles. A full basement runs under the entire length of the structure.

Originally designed to house 250 patients, it was accommodating 717 (325 males and 392 females) at the time of its completion. The 1950's and 1960's found nearly 2400 people residing in the main building with many additional structures built to house the ever-increasing population.

Additional land was purchased as time went by until 666 acres were owned by the State at this site. The present facility occupies 96 acres of this property still owned by the State of West Virginia. An iron fence encloses the spacious, beautiful grounds.

The final cost of the original building (CIRCA 1880) was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Main Building</td>
<td>$625,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land, Out Buildings, Engine House, Gas House, Brick and Colored Building</td>
<td>$100,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cost</td>
<td>$725,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No hospital, nationwide, was more substantially built with solid sandstone walls two and one-half feet thick, backed up throughout by brick (fired on the grounds). A beautiful structure, it is reminiscent of a medieval castle.

The hospital roof required three and one-half acres of slate, nine acres of flooring, one and one-half miles of sewer pipe, and one-half mile of ventilating pipe. Heating pipes would cover fifteen miles if laid end to end. There are two and one-half miles of gas pipe, twelve miles of water pipe, and two miles of spouting and drain pipe. The building has a total of nine hundred twenty-one windows and nine hundred six doors.
The center tower is two hundred feet high and contains a clock with three faces. Originally, this clock had Seth Thomas Works and was operated by weights. A huge iron bell tolled the hours. The clock stopped some twenty years ago and was recently replaced with new working parts by J. Hayes of C. J. Enterprises, financed by the 1987 Christmas in July Project.

There are four other cupolas on the main building standing one hundred fifty feet high. The walls of the building are one quarter mile long, one-eighth of a mile wide, and fifty feet high. The structure covers one acre. Weston Hospital was, at one time, completely self-sufficient with a reservoir, water treatment facility, oil and gas wells, working coal mines, ice plant, and even a morgue and beautiful enclosed cemetery. That is no longer the case. With the passage of time, there have been many changes made. This facility now relies on outside vendors, and no longer depends on prison and/or patient labor.

III
MODERN TIMES

On October 3, 1935, a near tragedy occurred at Weston Hospital when the three-story south section was completely destroyed by fire. The staff rang the dinner bell as soon as the fire was discovered and, even though it was 9:00 a.m., all the patients lined up and marched into the dining room to safety. No one died or was injured. There were six hundred men in this area at the time of the fire.

The patients were loaded on trains and moved to Jackson's Mill, a nearby 4-H Camp. The National Guard was brought in to protect them.

A grant from the W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration) allowed the state to quickly replace the burned out interior and make it fire resistant. The cost of
replacing the three-story south wing was $150,000.00.

All the patients were returned to the hospital by early November. The National Guard and West Virginia State Police shared the duty of patrolling the State 4-H Camp while the patients were confined at the site.

Weston Hospital has a long and colorful history. One very interesting fact is that Cornelia B. Wilbur, M.D. was Superintendent at this facility. Dr. Wilbur was the doctor who treated the young girl in the book “Sybil” that was made into a movie starring Patty Duke. Although this story is not about a patient from this hospital, it is significant that, at one time, Wilbur was the Superintendent of Weston Hospital. The book was written by Flora Rheta Schriber using information provided to her by both Sybil and Dr. Wilbur.

A few other interesting facts about Weston Hospital include having the first electric service in the community, generated here on the grounds, and also the first telephone.

In the early years, the entire staff lived on the grounds. They worked 12 hour shifts and had one day a month off. Even on that one day, they were required to be back on the grounds by 10:00 PM. They also ate all their meals here. It must have been similar to serving in the military. These extras allowed for rather small salaries. Many staff continued to live in the hospital until about 1963. There were rooms on the fourth floor, very much like a college dorm. These staff members also enjoyed the privilege of having all their meals in the special staff dining room.

When this practice was discontinued, each of the employees who resided at the hospital received an increase in pay to compensate for the fact that they had to begin paying rent and buying food.

Treatment procedures used over the years were similar to other hospitals in the United States during the
same time period.

When Weston Hospital was first constructed, the treatment plan was to provide a quiet, restful institution where the patients could enjoy complete solitude. Family and friends were discouraged from visiting. Later during the late nineteenth century work was considered therapeutic. Patients worked in the kitchen, on the wards, and on the grounds. When the coal mine was operational many became outstanding miners. Everyone who was physically able to work had chores. This kept them busy and, for many, it was the best possible therapy.

By the mid-nineteen forty’s, new treatment procedures were being developed. Hydrotherapy was used in many institutions. Weston Hospital had a most active treatment center that featured tubs, showers, and massage tables. The tubs were much like a whirlpool with moving water, alternating warm and cool. Patients often remained in these tubs for up to eight hours.

Lobotomy’s were performed here at about the same time. Often called ice pick therapy, this procedure deadened a portion of the frontal lobe of the brain and thereby left the patient without emotions.

Shock treatment, use of an electrical shock, was another new procedure introduced during this time period. This treatment is still in use at some facilities, but not at Weston Hospital.

Today a variety of modern, well-tested drugs are used successfully to treat persons with mental illness.

Clozapine is the newest drug now in use for severely mentally ill patients. Introduced in 1990, this medication has proven extremely effective for most. Although it requires close supervision, a 77% success rate has made the effort worthwhile.
The emphasis of hospital services today is on accurate assessment, appropriate treatment, and restoration of optimal functioning. This is quite in contrast to the historical purpose of public psychiatric hospitals, which was to provide custodial, residential care. This major change in mission is difficult, time consuming, and, at times, discouraging. Weston Hospital is well on its way to realizing the progressive, treatment-oriented objectives summarized in the mission statement, but some legacies of the past linger on.

The hospital is organized into seven specialized units, each unit with a specific treatment purpose. The focus of the Admissions Unit is to provide rapid stabilization, diagnostic assessment, individualized treatment planning, and short-term therapeutic interventions. A person newly-admitted to this hospital, voluntarily or involuntarily, with the possibility of a serious mental condition is brought to this unit. With appropriate diagnostic assessment and treatment, many people are able to leave the hospital well before the 30 days of involuntary care allowed prior to a commitment hearing.

Some people admitted to the hospital require extended treatment due to the severity or complexity of their mental illness problem and their response to treatment. The hospital has three extended psychiatric treatment units providing a range of therapeutic services for individuals whose mental illness results in continued serious impairment of adaptive functioning. Many patients on these units have limited involuntary commitments to the hospital for treatment, but voluntary patients may require extended treatment on these units.
as well.

A wide range of therapeutic services are available to individuals hospitalized at Weston. If medications were the answer for the multiple biopsychological problems of serious mental illnesses, there would be no need for specialized treatment facilities like Weston Hospital. The therapeutic services include: Therapeutic Recreation, Expressive Therapy, Physical Therapy, Medical Diagnostic Services, Chaplaincy, Hygiene, Patient Employment, Adaptive Skills Center, Movement Therapy, and unit-based group and individual therapies. An active Advocacy Department assists patients, participates in policy planning, and provides monitoring of all aspects of personal rights.

The Admissions Ward provides specialized services for individuals with serious mental illness and the significant problems of aging. The Substance Abuse Unit provides acute medical stabilization and chemical detoxification for individuals with substance abuse/dependence problems. A separate 28-day substance abuse treatment unit is located at the hospital and run by Appalachian Mental Health Center.

Weston Hospital today is a vital mental health care facility with an encouraging present, a history rich past, and a promising future. The facility has a capacity of 235 beds with an average occupancy of 225. Serving the fifty-five counties of West Virginia, the hospital provides a broad range of psychiatric services for individuals whose conditions require intensive treatment in a closely supervised environment. The mission of Weston Hospital is to provide the most therapeutic treatment possible for those with mental illness in a humane environment, respectful of personal rights, individuality, and dignity.
APPENDIX I
WESTON HOSPITAL
SUPERINTENDENTS/ADMINISTRATORS
1864-1992

1864-71 Dr. Ralph Hills 1951-57 Dr. H. Sinclair Tait
1871-81 Dr. T. B. Camden 1957-58 Dr. A. A. Milburn
(Acting)
1881-89 Dr. W. J. Bland 1958-59 Dr. Richard J. Lilly
1889-93 Dr. J. S. Lewis 1959-60 Dr. R. P. Hagerman
1893-97 Dr. W. P. Crumbacker 1960-61 Dr. Charles A. Zeller
1897-01 Dr. W. E. Stathers 1961-63 Dr. N. M. McFadyen
1901-06 Dr. A. H. Kunst 1963-65 Dr. Alexander H.
Baranski
1906-10 Dr. S. M. Steele 1965-65 Dr. J. E. Lazaro (Acting)
1910-17 Dr. C. W. Halterman 1965-67 Dr. Cornelia B. Wilbur
1917-21 Dr. C. E. White 1967-69 Dr. J. E. Lazaro (Acting)
1921-28 Dr. J. G. Petit 1969-71 Dr. Muharrem Gultekin
(Acting)
1927-29 Dr. J. W. Hartigan 1971-73 Dr. Richard A. Bracco
1928-29 Dr. M. D. Cure 1973-77 W. Obed Poling, M.H.A.
1929-34 Dr. Cecil Denham 1977-84 Arthur V. Paletti,
M.B.A.
1934-43 Dr. J. E. Offner 1984-84 Ann Stottlemyer
(Acting)
1943-45 Dr. Harry A. Garrison 1984-88 Rein Valdov, M.B.A.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>BUILDING</th>
<th>ARCHITECT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>Several shops &amp; houses **      Block house to house prisoners</td>
<td>R. Snowden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Soldiers Home</td>
<td>R. Snowden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Last ward to the left of original section - Ward 18)</td>
<td>Andrews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>AIU (original building)</td>
<td>R. Snowden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Civil War Halts Const.)</td>
<td>Andrews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Barn complete</td>
<td>R. Snowden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boiler House</td>
<td>Andrews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ice House</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sawmill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td>R. Snowden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd three-story section (to south of center complete)</td>
<td>Andrews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(now Wards 4, 5, &amp; 6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Stone Smoke House</td>
<td>R. Snowden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd section</td>
<td>Andrews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(next to Center Bldg)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>now Wards 1, 2, &amp; 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Center Building complete</td>
<td>R. Snowden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andrews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Engine House</td>
<td>R. Snowden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(50 X 50 two-story temporary housing for patients)</td>
<td>Andrews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1875-76 1st section to North of Center Building complete) Andrews (now Wards A, B, C, D, E, & F) Colored Building Bakery New Laundry Engine House New Kitchen

R. Snowden

1879 Final Section to North (now houses Skills Center, Volunteer Services, & Storage)

R. Snowden Andrews

1881 N-1 (now Recreation) N-2 (now Expressive Therapy) Unit 2 (now vacant)

V. E. Pettit

1915 State Store (now empty) Main Kitchen/Dining Room (still same today)

H. Russ Warne

1921 New Dairy Barn Machinery Co.

Louden

1930 General Hospital (now Lab/houses Wards L & M)

R. A. Gillis

1940 UNIT V (TB Unit, later MR/DD Unit, now vacant)

L. D. Schmidt

1941 Present Laundry L. D. Schmidt

1945-47 Sewage Treatment Plant J. E. Settle

1948 Rehab House Originally built as living quarters for staff. (BUILDING NO LONGER HERE)

Edward Wood

1949 Activities Building (Ground floor now Library) (Second and third floor vacant)

Deward Wood

1953 Unit 1 (Central Supply, Sewing Room,}

Alex Mahood
Museum Items) (Originally Male Geriatric Wards 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11)

Maintenance Building I. Richard Lee
(Still serves this purpose
ground floor - second floor
offices & Veterans Unit)

1954 Unit III Edward Wood
(Originally Wards L, M, & O now vacant)

Water Plant
(now belongs to City of Weston)
APPENDIX III

REASONS FOR ADMISSION
WEST VIRGINIA HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE
(WESTON)
OCTOBER 22, 1864 TO DECEMBER 12, 1889

Grief
Constitutional
Asthma
Domestic Trouble
The War
Sun stroke
Masturbation for 30 years
Trouble
Dissipation of nerves
Fever and Nerved
Interference
Intemperance
Religious excitement
Amenorrhea
Business Nerves
Fever
Jealousy
Exposure in Army
Self Abuse
Venerial Excesses
Puerperal
Shooting of daughter
Parents were cousins
Exposure and hereditary
Uterine Derangement
Death of sons in the War
Imprisonment
Political excitement
Fever and loss of law suit
Gastritis
Desertion by husband

Suppression of menses
Decoyed into the Army
Kicked in the head by a horse
Superstition
Bite of rattle snake
Dog bite
Snuff
Feebleness of intellect
Rumor of husband’s murder or his desertion
Mental excitement
Disappointment
Jealousy and Religion
Seduction & Disappointment
Severe labor
Disappointed love
Fits and desertion of husband
Suppressed masturbation
Deranged masturbation
Hard study
Dropsy
Effusion on the brain
False confinement
Sexual abuse and stimulants
Excitement as Officer
Fall from horse
Disappointed affection
Cold
Indigestion
Brain Fever
Carbonic Acid Gas
Sexual Derangement
Fell from horse in War
Exposure in Army
Religious enthusiasm
Dissolute habits
Loss of arm
Ill treatment by husband
Scarlatina
Small Pox
Hereditary predisposition
Epileptic fits
Softening of the brain
Menstrual deranged
Masturbation & syphilis
Gathering in the head
Bad company
Sunstroke
Carbuncle
Over Heat
Bad habits
& political excitement
Domestic affliction
Pecuniary losses
Worms
Congestion of brain
Remorse
Milk fever
Opium habit
Crime
Novel Reading
Egotism
Salvation Army
Imaginary female trouble
Diptheria
The War
Exposure and quackery
Spinal irritation
Snuff eating for 2 years
Periodical fits
Tabacco & masturbation
Hystaria
Female disease
Gunshot wound
Liver and Social Disease
Seduction
Kick of horse
Vicious Vices in Early Life
Bloody flux
Politics
Women
Douby about mother's ancestors
Nymphomania
Moral sanity
Greediness
Excessive sexual abuse
Fighting Fire
Bad Whiskey
Women trouble
Over action on the mind
Explosion of shell nearby
Marriage of son
Medicine to prevent conception
Over study of religion
Immoral life
Time of Life
Young lady and fear
Cerebral softening
Laziness
Over taxing mental powers

Intemperance & Business Trouble

(This information was obtained from the first log book used at this hospital: spelling, etc. just as written.)