

STORY OF THE LEHI HOSPITAL

Today, on the south corner of State Street in Lehi, Utah one can see piles and piles of old broken bricks in various shades of red, pink and white. These bricks were once a proud white two story building which housed the Lehi Hospital from 1937 to 1967.

My first baby was born there in 1944 during World War II while my husband was in the army fighting in Italy. I was living with my in-laws (R I and Elvina Johnson) on Trinnaman Lane.

This building was first constructed in 1891, known as Lehi Commercial & Savings Bank. The bank opened its doors in June 1891 with a capitalization of \$50,000.

Winds of financial discontent began to blow across America in 1907, causing the bank to close in early 1911. Eventually in 1921, the institution was reopened serving other uses and businesses. There was a large ballroom on the main floor. For a short time it served as the chapel of the Lehi Fourth Ward while their building was being remodeled.

In 1925, Dr. Frederick Worlton purchased the building and had it remodeled into a hospital. Suddenly and sadly he died at a young age. Dr. Elmo Eddington,

another young physician, purchased the building but it needed more remodeling to be efficient.

This was during the Depression years in the 1930's when financial grants were difficult to obtain. So, in 1937, Dr. Eddington deeded the building to the City of Lehi. The town was then granted \$14,000 to modernize the building into an 18 bed hospital. From 1937 to 1967 this hospital provided uninterrupted service to the area.

The two storied hospital occupied perhaps 1/3 of a block on State Street. There were 3 wide steps which opened into the waiting room of the hospital and on the west side were steps leading to the 18 private hospital rooms on the second floor. At the very back on the south east corner of the second floor was the operating room with wide windows to provide good lighting. In the middle of the back of the hospital was a large elevator, large enough to accommodate a hospital bed or the large cart holding the trays of food for the patients. The kitchen was on the first floor on the south west corner of the building.

Leading from the reception room was a large hall. Dr. Eddington's office was on the west in a private room. Also off the hall was large closet with shelves holding supplies. There was also a wide shelf where an electric hot plate sat. This was before the era of

disposable plastic syringes and needles. The needles needed to be sharpened on a wide file and both were boiled to sterilize them. This was an era before antibiotics and disposable needles had been discovered.

On the east side of the first floor were the treatment rooms where patients were seen and treated. Each of the three had single white metal beds with white sheets and bedspread. After a surgery the patients were placed here until they were recovered enough to go home. If two children of one family each had a tonsillectomy one child was placed at each end of the bed. I checked them often and if at noon they were sufficiently recovered they were sent home, the bed linen changed for the patients the doctor would see that afternoon.

This was an era when it was common for all children to have tonsils and adenoids removed, called T & A. Dr. Eddington taught me how to drop ether slowly onto a mask which was over the patient's mouth and nose. When the patients were at the correct stage of "sleep" he would remove the tonsils and adenoids. Since the advent of antibiotics this surgery is seldom done.

Leading from the hall above to these rooms was a wide ramp which I must have run up and down hundreds of times each day. My legs ached so each night.

Next to these three rooms was a soundproof delivery room. When an expectant mother would check into the hospital above the nurses would check her closely until it was time for the baby to be delivered. She would be rolled in that bed into the elevator to come downstairs to the delivery room. Often we would stop seeing patients, go into that room where the baby would be delivered and then go back to work seeing the patients of that day.

That elevator was so slow. I remember one day we were called that an expectant mother was going to delivery her baby very rapidly... could Dr. rushed upstairs to deliver the baby? We rushed upstairs to deliver the baby only to learn they then had put this mother on the elevator to go downstairs to the delivery room. We ran back down the stairs and still had to wait for the elevator to come to the ground floor.

Toward the back of the building next to the delivery room was the X-ray room. Dr. would take the X-rays and I would develop them. Because war effort used so many supplies when we ordered Barium Enemas supplies they always came with chocolate flavor. (Interesting)

Off this room was a small room with microscopes where I would could study and count white cells. I had

learned how to do this at the U of U the year before.

This was a difficult time for our country. It was 1945 during World War II. Each night when the Salt Lake City papers were delivered we dreaded to see in big dark letters the words....KILLED IN ACTION....and below....WOUNDED IN ACTION. At times Dr.Eddington would be called to a home where a son had been wounded or killed. He would give words of comfort and often a hypodermic of some medicine to try to help the family cope with the tragedy.

Food stamps needed to buy certain foods, especially canned foods. I remember a bottle of Ketchup took 65 points. This wasn't such a problem in Lehi where families grew vegetables, had fruit trees and a root cellar where bottled foods were stored.

. Disposable diapers had not been invented and diaper material was often difficult to find. Washing was done with an old fashioned washing machine or on a scrub board and then rinsed several times. In the winter clothes were hung outside on the clothesline and partially frozen dry. .

The winters of 1944 and 1945 were very cold. It seemed such a long walk to and from the hospital each day.

I am so thankful for my in-laws who took such wonderful care of my baby son while I worked.

Driving through Lehi today I miss seeing the hospital and my memories there. It is a comforting feeling that I was able to contribute in a small way to help our country during wartime.

After my children were grown I returned to school and worked in many areas of health care.

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