



FRIENDS OF HISTORIC VINELAND



Memories Of The Past In Medicine

A History of Maternity Services at Newcomb Hospital

By: David J. Schwartz, M.D.

For those women, who may still remember having delivered a baby at Newcomb Hospital in 1961, the year that I moved to Vineland, you will recall (if your trip to the hospital occurred at night) that the hospital entrances were locked and you had to ring a door bell to be allowed to enter the building. You were greeted by the nursing supervisor who doubled as the transport system, housekeeping department, labor room assistant and admissions

clerk. If you could walk, you walked, or if labor was more advanced, you still walked. Wheel chairs were always in short supply. To get to the labor and delivery area required a trip to the third floor of the 1921 building on the cage-like open elevator, the kind that we associate today with warehouses. It is still in use and is as reliable as ever. But, if you were in a hurry, you walked (which probably helped the labor process.)

The labor and delivery suite consisted of one delivery room, two labor rooms, a tiny hallway desk for a nurse's station, one bathroom and a storage room that doubled as a doctor's bedroom or for whatever the space was most needed. The labor room was about 8 feet x

8 feet x 8 feet in size and had one bare light bulb in the ceiling, a goose neck light stand at the foot of the bed, a night stand at the side of the bed with a bell to call for a nurse. The beds were crib-like cages with high side rails and no padding, except for the mattress. There were also two cribs in this room and another yet smaller room had only one crib. If more than three patients were in labor, the extra patient labored in the hallway. The one delivery room was not much larger than the labor room, but was well equipped with a delivery table, a large overhead surgical light and a complete assortment of obstetrical instruments.

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There was no anesthesia apparatus except for the ones in the operating rooms. Since the operating rooms were also on the same floor and just down the hallway, patients could easily be transported there if the need arose.

Very few deliveries were attended by an Anesthesiologist. Local anesthesia or no anesthesia was the accepted standard of care. Depending on how quickly the delivery room was needed, a patient was kept on the delivery table after delivery for up to an hour as recovery time, and then transported to their room on the second floor of the 1921 building.

Following their birth, the newborns were placed in a baby warmer that had a row of light bulbs in its base to produce the heat. Although the labor and delivery area was very small, it functioned well until the number of deliveries began to increase in the late 1960's. By this time, the number of Obstetricians and Gynecologists on the staff had increased to five and the hospital was attracting more patients from the surrounding area. It was also during the early 70's that Millville Hospital closed their maternity services, adding additional admissions to the Newcomb census. An area on the first floor of the 1921 building was redesigned and renovated to accommodate the rising number of deliveries. There were now two delivery rooms, side by side, a large common labor room with six stalls divided by high walls and folding curtains. A nurse's desk in the center of the room allowed a nurse to view all six patients.

It was a design ahead of its time, but did very little for patient privacy, it being used at a time when patient's rights and privacy were not high on the hospital's mission

statement. But, natural childbirth, Lamaze and spousal presence in the delivery room was being promoted and yet resisted. I recall a patient's spouse who handcuffed himself to his wife's bed and was bodily removed after the use of a pair of wire cutters by two strong orderlies.

In the early 70's, the postpartum area was moved to the first floor of the newly added South Wing. It provided large bright rooms with a view of Chestnut Avenue and with a private bathroom in each room, a first for Newcomb's maternity patients. Newcomb had become the premier obstetrical facility in South Jersey, outside of the metropolitan Philadelphia area and the Atlantic City area. The Obstetrical Department had grown to eight physicians. The four family physicians, Drs. Corson, Magolda, Marchione and Mattioli, who prior to 1961 had delivered more than half the number of babies at Newcomb, were now attending only an occasional delivery. Dr. Delmo Mattioli, who continued doing obstetrics, was the last of the group to give up deliveries.

The hospital admissions continued to increase during the 70's resulting in a waiting list for elective admissions. Long range planning experts, consulted by the Board of Trustees, estimated that there would be over 2000 deliveries per year by the year 2000. A large West Wing was planned to include a new obstetrical floor. The obstetrical staff was permitted considerable input into the design and equipment for this area. Except for one area that the staff viewed as useless and the architects considered critical and came to be known as the "bowling alley", the suite was a showcase of obstetrical design and efficiency.

The new wing opened in 1979 and continues to be used. It remains a modern and functional suite even by today's standards.

The estimate of 2000 deliveries by the millennium has not yet materialized, but the unthinkable concept back in the 1960's *of one county hospital, now to be realized* may see a combined Obstetrical Department produce over 2000 deliveries in the new hospital.

There is a plaque on the wall at the entrance to the maternity suite, known as the Dr. Calvin Hahn Maternity Pavilion which honors Dr. Hahn, the first Board Certified Obstetrician at Newcomb Hospital for his devotion to improving maternal welfare and his efforts in establishing an Obstetrical Department at Newcomb Hospital. I look forward to seeing this kind of dedication by the young physicians of the future combined Obstetrical Staff carried over to the new facility when the bricks and mortar on South State Street no longer hear the warming cries of newborn babies.

Editors Note: Dr. Schwartz is himself somewhat of an icon in Obstetrics in this area, having served the community faithfully for many years. He was honored as Physician Of The Year in 1997, and continues to serve Newcomb Hospital in an administrative capacity. His Memories Of The Past In Medi-



Museum Committee of South Jersey Hospital System to publish a book on the history of the hospitals of Cumberland County.

The Museum Committee of the South Jersey Hospital System is involved in compiling the history of the three hospitals of Cumberland County that will close when the new regional hospital is completed. The “unthinkable” is in the process of happening—the three major communities of Cumberland County will now be

served by one hospital. This hospital obviously had its origins in the three hospitals of Vineland, Millville, and Bridgeton. These institutions are the parents of the new hospital, and their achievements and history should not go unnoticed or unrecorded.

The contemplated book will have some of the history of the three institutions, pictures, and stories of individuals that were present during the heyday of those institutions. Hopefully this book will emphasize how much the regional hospital owes to the individual

cities and people that created the original hospitals, and will record for the future the great things they accomplished.

While this information is being collected, our Newsletter will share some of those stories with you. Appearing in this issue is the first of such stories by Dr. David Schwartz, who is now retired. Dr. Schwartz played a major role in obstetrics in Newcomb and his achievements will live on in the new regional center where obstetrical services will continue to be offered and undoubtedly expanded.

Indians Again: Mary Smith from the “Old Barn” read our article in the last News Letter and decided to share with us some of her experiences with Indian Artifacts. She told us how her brothers had found arrow heads on the farm of her uncle. Also, she mentioned that when they built a house and were digging the foundation, they had found some round, “soft and messy stuff on the inside that

was brown and red that they would use to paint their arms and faces.”

The number of people that did find Indian artifacts in this area is truly amazing. There were many of them. When you speak to people who are knowledgeable of Indian settlements, they usually mention that the best finds were near streams, especially if the ground was a bit elevated. Apparently the Indians would make their camps in

such a location and it was more likely to find arrowhead as well as other Indian objects in such an area..

One of the things that has been lacking during our Founder’s Day Event is a strong representation of our Native Americans. Hopefully, this year, the problem will be corrected at our Founder’s Day Event!!!

RICOTTA PIE (PIZZA DI RICOTTA)

Francesca Maggioncalda's recipe for ricotta pie.

Francesca was born in Italy and learned all these nifty recipes from her mother. When she came to America, she continued to bake them. Francesca is an amazing person. When she came to America, she had to learn English. Then she went to school and became a nurse. She worked at Newcomb Medical Center. After she became an excellent floor nurse, she took more courses, and became an operating room nurse. She now is one of the greatest things in our operating room. And, besides all of that she was able to raise a family and cook some of these great dishes.

INGREDIENTS:

2 lbs of ricotta, drained	1 cup of sugar	3 eggs	1 teaspoon of vanilla
1 teaspoon of almond extract or lemon extract.			

PREPARATION:

Mix all the ingredients by spoon. Prepare pie crust, use you favorite recipe!!

Roll out about 3/4 of the dough and pour the above mixed ingredients in the pan. The remaining dough can be cut up in strips or cut into designs with a cookie cutter and then placed on top of the ingredients.

Bake the pie for 45 minutes in a preheated oven at 350 degrees. When baked, the crust should be a light brown. When you eat this pie, think of Francesca and how great she is in the operating room

Ok, So What's New!!!

Well, we did get the calendar out on time. For those of you that still don't have one, they should be available at the Vineland Public Library and the Downtown Improvement District Office.

We think this year's calendar was really great, and the thing that makes it great are the pictures. Which brings me to the point, that if you have a great old picture of Vineland, we can use it!! We are now working on the calendar for 2003!!

Members that paid their dues for the last two years were sent a calendar as a sign of our appreciation. If you did contribute but did not receive a calendar, please let me know and we will send you one.

We are now actively planning for Founder's Day. Hopefully, it will be bigger and better than last year. We hope it doesn't **Rain!!** If you would like to be a part of the event, please let us know. We can use about any type of activity as long as there is something about it that involves history. We are particularly interested in having activities where our school children participate, and also activities of a hands-on type where the kids who come to visit the event can participate.

Finally, if you have any great stories about Newcomb Hospital that we can publish, or any items that you think we could use in our museum displays, please let us know. We are always interested

Thanks so much!!



Founder's Day Soldiers, May 2001

Young men line up to start drilling prior to joining the Union Army Of The Potomac. After drilling, they could join the Cavalry, the Regular Army or the Nursing Corp.

Special for 2002—Those that join the Friends will be sent a set of 10 post cards with pictures of old Vineland as a sign of our appreciation!

DO YOU WANT TO JOIN??

TO BE A MEMBER

BENEFACTOR.....	\$100
SPONSOR.....	\$50
FAMILY.....	\$35
INDIVIDUAL.....	\$30
STUDENT.....	\$5

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The Friends have no connections with the Vineland Historical Society or any other society!

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