



FRIENDS OF HISTORIC VINELAND



MEDICAL MOMENTS IN HISTORY

A History Of Nursing Care (Continued)

By: Frank De Maio, M.D.,
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Special thanks to Nurses
Cathy Flaherty and Pat
Heslop.

Despite the fact that Florence Nightingale was strong willed and determined, she felt that nurses should be subservient to physicians. This was more or less accepted initially, but eventually nurses began to resent such a role and did not appreciate being "handmaidens" to physicians.

When one considers the dismal lack of knowledge of the medical profession during the early years of nursing, one can see that made little practical difference who served who. But, as care became more and more complex, and

the amount of testing and specialized care became critical, there developed a need for a great variety of constant and specialized care of patients. For example, initially physicians could easily carry a kit with them that gave them a rough idea of the patient's hemoglobin, and they could do a microscopic analysis of urine, but it eventually became impossible for them to do the battery of tests that are routinely done today in virtually every patient. The same was true with direct patient care that required complex intravenous therapy, or monitoring of vital signs.

The virtual explosion of different treatment modalities gave rise to a number of "allied health personal" such as respira-

tory therapist, physical therapists, x-ray technicians, and so forth; but this also placed more responsibility upon nurses and made it mandatory that they have more skills and knowledge. For example, when the ICU opened up in Newcomb, in 1970, none of the nurses had the skills needed to use a stethoscope to listen to a chest or the heart, and none of them could read EKG rhythm strips. They definitely had never shocked a person who developed a cardiac arrhythmia, and never intubated a patient that had stopped breathing. Yet, all the equipment was there for the physicians to use, except that they were often not there (continued next page)

Cultural Events For October

Each year the Sicilian American Club of this area sponsors a number of activities in honor of Italian culture and heritage. The tradition continues this year.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a calendar of events for the month with a brief description of each event.

There is something here for everybody, and I really hope that you can attend some or all of the events!!!

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Pediatric Ward during days of Mrs. English

when it needed to be used. So, logically, nurses and/or "ancillary help" had to be trained to do the job! This greatly increased the responsibility of the nurses and the need for greater education and skills.

Like all hospitals, at Newcomb, a number of nurses were present in that transition period. They had made medicine a life long vocation, and they had seen it all, heard it all, and done it all. Such were nurses like Mrs. English, Carrie Mahady and Elloree Channels.

Now take Mrs. English. A doctor might go up to a young patient and tell them that they had diabetes, and tell the unlucky youngster that he/she would have to take an injection of insulin every day for the rest of their lives. Naturally the doctor would minimize this daily task. In those days (remember, doctors did it all then) the doctor was responsible for showing the young patient how to give the injection and say something like "it really is no big deal." At this point, Mrs. English would pull out a syringe filled with saline (salt and water, no

danger) and say to the doctor, "Here, give yourself the first injection and show our little patient here that *it really is not a big deal.*" So, the doctor now had to stick himself, or look like a coward to the patient. After the doctor did that, he would say, (if he had not passed out,) "See, I told you it was nothing!" The big smirk on the face of Mrs. English at this point, was a great thing to see!

What was considered acceptable care for a hospital admission in the good old days was much different than today. Patients were put in the hospital, for example, to do a barium enema. That was because the insurance companies would not pay for the procedure if done as an outpatient. So, every excuse was made to put the patient in the hospital to guarantee insurance payment. For many patients, nursing care consisted mainly of bathing, feeding, giving medication (usually by mouth), simple treatments such as changing bandages and OF COURSE THE BEDPAN. It was therefore not impossible for one or two nurses with the help of nurse's aides to care for 30 patients.

Of great help were the little tricks that the experienced nurses would learn. For example, to save time, Mrs. Mahady would come out of the Nursing office and call out to a patient all the way down the end of the hall, "Did you have a bowel movement today?" The patient would shout back the answer and Carrie would go back in

her office to finish her paperwork.

Pat Dileo was a great one for sitting at the counter and every time a doctor came on the floor, would call them over and tell them the patient problems that she was aware of. If there was a serious problem, she would run in the room with the doctor, give him a quick report, then run back to her counter to make sure she didn't miss another doctor.

Newcomb eventually grew to have 235 beds. There was a waiting list of 65 patients for months on end. Admissions were ranked as emergency, urgent, or routine. Beds were actually placed up in the hallways with screens around them "for privacy." All of this changed with the improvement in medical care and the change in insurance payment.

No longer could we admit a patient just to have gall bladder x-rays, or barium enemas. Heart attack patients no longer stayed in the hospital 30 days—5 days was more likely. Cataract surgery was over in one day, not 15 days. For gall bladder surgery, the 10 day admission is just a dream. One day and you are out!! No wonder then that the hospital has cut down its bed census to 110 beds to cover both Vineland and Millville.

(Next time, Newcomb's Nursing Residence and how we got them to come to Vineland!)

An Interview with President Grant: By Charles K. Landis, 1874

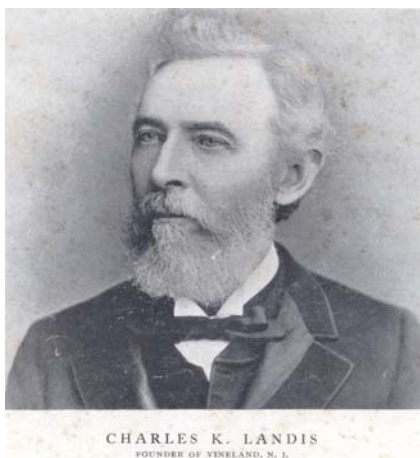
During the last Grant Administration, I had occasion to visit Washington in company with the Hon. Wm. A. House, on the business of a friend. Mr. House of that day was a prominent lawyer, banker and local statesman of our town.

When we visited the proper department for our business in Washington we got through with it very successfully in about fifteen minutes. I then asked Mr. House, "What shall we do?" Said he, "I wish to visit the White House and ask, if possible, to see the President."

I had never been there myself and heartily agreed with this suggestion. When we got to the White House, we were ushered into a large room, around the sides of which were a great many distinguished looking men, some in uniform, evidently upon the same errand, and waiting to see the President. We were requested to take a seat at the tail end, which we did. Shortly an important looking individual came up and asked us for our cards, which we gave him. In a little while he came back and requested to know what our business was, or to write it in a memorandum book which he held in his hand, I forget which. I told him that we had no business.

"No business?" he repeated interrogatively.

Said I, "No business whatever, we have only come to see the President." At which he looked rather surprised. He left, and



returned to us immediately and said that the President would see us at once. All the people who had come before us, some of whom no doubt had been waiting for hours, looked astonished and as though they thought we must be some princes or ambassadors, though I do not think that any appearance of ours would justify that belief.

We were ushered into a moderate sized room and General Grant was standing at a table, with a pile of clippings from newspapers before him.

Looking at us, said he, "Gentlemen," (extending his hand,) "you are the first I have seen this year. I am glad to see you. How is Vineland?" Sit down and do not hurry. I have been in Vineland and it is certainly a beautiful place. I have a vivid recollection of its green hedges and long avenues of beautiful shade trees, also of a long prayer which a very good clergyman made when I attended the dedication of the High School. He

appeared to pray for everything upon earth and it was painfully near dinner time. I do not think that he would have stopped yet if a smart shower had not come up. You must have had a forester to select all those fine trees."

"No," said I, "The selection was made by the people themselves under stipulations upon which I sold the land."

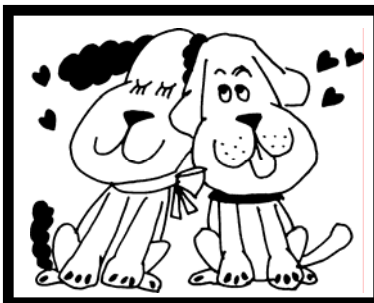
"Well then," said he, "you must have very intelligent people, and in the beauty of your trees you beat Washington. But I hope some day this defect in Washington will be cured. I should like if my duties will permit, some time in the future to see Vineland again."

I do not think that this talk was merely complimentary or courtly, as Gen. Grant impressed me as being a very plain and sincere man.

Not wishing to take up his time we left. But I have often thought of what he said and of the efforts which have since made Washington one of the best and most beautifully shaded cities in the world; and what the example of Vineland may have had to do with it.

One of the founders of Colorado Springs told me in the city of Mexico that they owed all the beauty of that place to fact that he had seen Vineland before starting it.

We want to do out dog-gone best to thank all the people that contributed money towards our activities during the few years. The list is as follows:



We think you
are great!!

Alexandra Fox
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If you haven't paid your dues for this year, there's still time, and we still need you!!!!

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