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2009

Maine General Hospital/Maine Medical Center Significant Events (partial listing)

Maine Medical Center

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THE ARCHIVES AT MAINE MEDICAL CENTER

While you're here, we thought you might enjoy learning something of the history of this hospital.

Maine Medical Center, together with its predecessors, Maine General Hospital, Maine Eye and Ear Infirmary, Children's Hospital, and Brighton Medical Center has played a vital role in Maine's rich medical history.

Our collection begins in 1868 with the origins of Maine General Hospital. Among our holdings are the original Act of Incorporation of MGH and the minutes of various medical and administrative boards and committees that have established hospital policy over the years.

The study of the history of medicine is enhanced with our extensive photographic holdings and collection of medical artifacts. We have bloodletting equipment, sets of surgical instruments, and various mechanical devices used in treatment of cardiac, pulmonary and other conditions from approximately 1880-1950.

Material from the Archives has been incorporated into a number of historical articles written by members of our staff for medical journals. We also serve patrons from outside the medical community.

In this history packet, we have included a series of photographs depicting some of the changes in MGH/MMC over the years, as well as a brief timeline of important events in the development of the hospital that we see today. If you have any questions or would like further information, please use the contact information below. Enjoy this look back into our past and don’t forget to see our History Wall located on the ground floor!
Maine General Hospital/Maine Medical Center Significant Events
(only a partial listing, please see the Archivist)

- 1868 - Hospital is incorporated. There were no hospital facilities in the state other than those for the military, the insane or the destitute. Others requiring care were usually treated at their homes or in almshouses.
- 1871 - Cornerstone laid for Eastern Pavilion (wing). The land was originally the site for the State Arsenal. The design of the hospital is in the Italian gothic style, sited on a hill with beneficial air circulation, thought to prevent the spread of disease.
- 1874 - Eastern Pavilion complete. The original plan called for a central building with offices, mechanicals etc. and four pavilions. At the opening only the East Wing was complete – serious funding problems!
- 1874 - First patient admitted in November
- 1876 - Central Building complete
- 1878 - First tonsillectomy performed (not corroborated)
- 1882 – A Children’s ward opens on the fourth floor—the original idea coming from a group of young ladies ages 6-12.
- 1884 – Construction of a surgical amphitheater behind the East wing—seating 220 people with 35 feet from floor to ceiling.
- 1885 - The MGH Training School for Nurses established. The first class graduated in 1887.
- 1891 - First appendectomy performed (not corroborated)
- 1892 - West Wing and Superintendent’s House complete
- 1892 – Electricity installed, water from driven well rather than from Portland Water District, more cost effective
- 1899 - MGH established as a teaching institution -affiliation with the Medical School of Maine (part of Bowdoin College—it closed in 1921) and Portland School for Medical Instruction. Many of the MGH physicians were on the faculties of these schools. The students received their clinical training at MGH.
- 1902 – Nurses Home, named for Alida Leese (first Director of Nursing), is built behind the East wing
- 1903 - MGH establishes an 8 hr. workday for nurses, it had been 11 hours.
1903 – Porte-cochère added to the front entrance of the central building
1910 - Journal of the Maine Medical Association is established
1920s - Outpatient services, x-ray services, social work services, cancer clinic established
1923 – A Hospital Unit is organized in the event of war. It would later become the 67th General Hospital during World War II.
1924 - First electrocardiograph at MGH
1925 - Mandatory retirement age of 65 set for all staff
1931 - New pavilion opened and complete remodeling of old MGH building. This addition was placed perpendicular to the original East wing and had space for private rooms. The new (2008) main entrance is at the far right of the 1931 pavilion.
1947 - Surgical residency program approved by American College of Surgeons
1948 - The Children's Hospital (est. 1908 on Danforth St.) and MGH merge, patients transferred to MGH, but Children's retained autonomy
1951 - Maine Medical Center incorporated
1956 - Formal merger of Maine Eye and Ear Infirmary (est. 1886 on Federal St., then to Congress St. 1982), The Children's Hospital and Maine General Hospital-dedicated as MMC, July 8, 1956. New MMC building completed. This is where the present Bramhall entrance (information desk) is located.
1958 - First "Special Care Unit" in Maine opens at MMC
1959 - First open heart surgery performed at MMC
1965 – Alida Leese Nurses' Home razed to make room for new structure (Richards Wing)
1965 – Reservoir drained to form the present visitor parking area at Chadwick and Vaughan streets
1967 - Final class of MMC School of Nursing- The trend was toward nursing training that included the Bachelor of Science degree, usually from a college or university with a five-year program.
1969 - Richards Wing completed as first major addition since 1956
1974 - New Diagnostic Facility and Southern Maine Radiation Therapy Institute opens (at original MGH front entrance)
1974 - Level III Neonatal Intensive Care unit opens
1975 - Ambulatory Surgery Program begins
► 1980 - New non-invasive vascular lab opened by Dept. of Surgery
► 1984 - Charles Dana Health Education Center is complete
► 1984 - Level I Trauma Service established at MMC
► 1985 - LL Bean building at MMC complete
► 1987 - MMC begins autologous bone marrow transplants
► 1989 - Mobile kidney lithotripter comes to MMC
► 1993 - MMC listed among 18 top hospitals nationally
► 1994 - First living, non-related donor kidney transplant at MMC
► 1995 - 10 MMC physicians listed as "Best Doctors in America" from national survey of interns and residents
► 1997 - MMC merges with former Brighton Medical Center
► 1998 - Gibson Pavilion and Barbara Bush Children's Hospital completed (upper floors of Bean building)
► 1999 - Implantable vagus nerve stimulator available at MMC for first time
► 1999 - MMC on HICA list of top 100 cardiovascular hospitals
► 2000 - MMC one of the first centers to offer intravascular repair of aneurysm
► 2000 - MMC's Chief Perfusionist elected President of American Academy of Cardiovascular Perfusion
► 2001 - MMC heads first research project in nation designed to address major psychosis
► 2002 - First PET scan in Maine at MMC
► 2002 - MMC's congestive heart failure program only the second in the nation to receive JCAHO certification
► 2002 - First pancreas transplant in Maine done at MMC
► 2003 - MMC named one of top 100 hospitals (out of 6000) in the nation
► 2003 - Back to back Presidents of New England Surgical Society from MMC
► 2004 - MMC in top 100 cardiovascular hospitals by Solucient
► 2005 - MMC introduces Visicu-remote intensive care monitoring system
► 2005 - Groundbreaking for Women and Infants Building as well as expanded Emergency services, parking garage, helipad (all referred to as the Charles Street Project)
  - Computed Tomography Imaging System established
► 2006 - MMC receives Magnet Hospital status from ANCC
► 2007 - MMC named "Top 50 Hospitals" by US News & World Report
- MMC now Level I Trauma Center

➢ 2007 - ASU opens on MMC's Scarborough campus
- Helipad opens for emergency patient transport

➢ 2008 – Dedication of the East Tower (formerly named Women and Infants building)
- Announcement of medical education affiliation with Tufts University School of Medicine

➢ 2009- First group of Residents arrive from Tufts

Note: Some of the listings above contain the phrase “not corroborated”. This refers to events that are thought to have occurred at the date specified, but research materials have not yet been located to establish positive confirmation.
The original architect's plan for MGH shows 4 pavilions, only two of which were actually built. This design, by Fassett, was to benefit patients by allowing for the free circulation of fresh air found at the top of Bramhall's Hill.
The original buildings at Maine General Hospital, c. 1876

The building, designed by Fassett, was originally to have four pavilions off the central building. In 1874, MGH opened for business with only the east pavilion completed. There was insufficient funding at the time to complete the project. The central building was added in 1876, followed by the west pavilion and superintendent's house, in 1892. This structure and those to the rear are still visible today, despite several calls over the years to raze the original structure.
Members of the original medical staff at Maine General Hospital, c 1880

Row seated: I. Dana, S. Gordon, J. Gilman, W. W. Greene, S. Weeks
Row standing: C. Hunt, H. Small, F. Gerrish, A. Thayer

These renowned physicians were instrumental in the founding of MGH.
Surgery in the amphitheater at Maine General Hospital c. 1892
Maine Eye and Ear Infirmary, designed by John Calvin Stevens, at the corner of Bramhall and Congress streets, in 1892

MEEI merged with MGH and Children's Hospital to form the Maine Medical Center. The building then housed student nurses, and is now Holt Hall Luxury Apartments
This photograph shows a female ward c. 1900. The doctors and student nurses are checking patients who have a very clean environment, but no privacy. Though electricity had been installed at MGH in 1892, there is little evidence of it on the early wards.
At least one, and possibly all of these women were members of the 1896 graduating class of the Maine General Hospital Training School for Nurses.
Alida Leese Nurses' Home at Maine General Hospital, c. 1920s

The building was constructed behind the east pavilion in 1901 to house students of the MGH School of Nursing. It was demolished in 1965 to make way for the present Richards wing.
Student nurse from the Maine General Hospital School of Nursing, caring for a newborn in the nursery at MGH in the early 1920s
An operating room at Maine General Hospital in 1927
Architect's concept drawing of the new pavilion, completed in 1931

This was the first major addition to hospital since the original MGH buildings were completed in 1892. It greatly expanded the number of patient beds and clinical areas. The current admitting area is located on the ground floor of this pavilion, behind the spot where the automobile appears in this drawing.
The Children's Hospital, established in 1908, was formerly the Mussey mansion on High Street, in Portland. It closed in 1948 and patients were moved up to MGH. Children's retained a separate corporate identity until 1951 when Maine Medical Center was formed by the merger of MGH with Children's and Maine Eye and Ear Infirmary.
Maine General Hospital School of Nursing, class of 1941, gathers at Christmas

This photograph shows members of the class and the Director in full uniform on the stairs of the Eastland Hotel in Portland.
Members of the Maine General Hospital medical and nursing staffs affiliated with the 67th General Hospital during World War II. Following training at Fort Bliss, Texas, they served in England. This photograph was taken at the entrance to MGH in September, 1942.
Maine Medical Center about 1960 with the reservoir still in place

The reservoir was drained in 1965 to make room for the present parking lot.
Southern Maine Radiation Therapy Institute building, constructed at the entrance to the MGH building in 1974.
Maine Medical Center campus before the addition of the East Tower

The original MGH building is at the center, surrounded by the 1929 Pavilion, the MMC Pavilion, the Richards Wing, the Southern Maine Radiation Therapy Institute and the Dana Center, LL Bean, Gibson Pavilion and The Inpatient Unit of The Barbara Bush Children's Hospital at Maine Medical Center.