

Lawrence General Hospital Collection, 1876-2003

General Information

Repository: Lawrence History Center

Accession Number: 2011.095

Dates: 1876-2003

Quantity: 11 Boxes, 1 Scrapbook

Processed By: Barbara Hartrich and Jennifer Williams

Access: Open for research.

Provenance

This collection was gifted to the Lawrence History Center by the Lawrence General Hospital, from the office of CEO Diane Anderson.

Historical Note

In the mid-1870s the members of the Flower Mission in Lawrence decided that they wished to help the children of working-class families. At a meeting on October 5, 1875 they formed the Ladies' Union Charitable Society of Lawrence, the purpose being to care for children whose mothers had to work. To this end the Day Nursery was opened in November 1876. The Nursery provided day care for children, and some children were allowed to remain overnight.

In 1877 it was decided that a hospital should be opened, something that the Society had been considering for some time. Dr. Susan Crocker and the members of the Society began to provide free medical care in 1877 when an outbreak of Scarlet Fever occurred. The Society members felt that they needed better facilities and therefore constructed a new building, which included an Invalids' Home. The Home had an operating room, several rooms for private patients, and a sick ward with eight beds. Injured and ill individuals were accepted into the Home.

On October 24, 1882 the Society decided to amend their constitution so that they could open a training school for nurses. The school opened in 1882, with weekly lectures given by physicians from Lawrence. By 1886 students participated in a two year course, and they lived in the hospital. They were taught using a textbook and twenty-eight lectures per year, along with their duties in the hospital.

By 1884 the hospital had a regular medical staff and the Society was finding that they needed more room to accommodate all the patients who wished to come to the hospital. An annex was therefore built. In July of 1887 the Society voted to rename the hospital the Lawrence General Hospital, and sought to build a bigger complex. The hospital was serving Lawrence, Methuen, Andover, and North Andover, cities and towns in which the population was growing considerably. Furthermore, new space was needed for the most up-to-date technologies, such as electricity.

The Society was unable to expand the hospital until the last few years of the century, when several of the hospital's major funders died and left it considerable sums of money. The Society was able to build a new hospital with sick wards, a maternity ward, a kitchen, telephones, electricity, and plumbing fixtures. More nurses were needed for this larger hospital and therefore the nursing school was

enlarged to accommodate at first fifteen, and then twenty, students. They trained for three years and attended forty-eight lectures per year.

By 1912 space was again becoming a problem, and the society especially wanted to build a children's ward. It was therefore decided to close the Children's Home (the successor to the Day Nursery), and use the proceeds to expand the hospital. This was done, and the children's ward was built, along with a second home for nurses. However, the population was still increasing and even more room was needed.

In 1937 a supporter of the hospital died and left it a large sum of money, which prompted a successful fundraising effort for \$200,000. This raised enough money to create a new building, which added 63 new beds, a surgical department, maternity and obstetric departments, and an x-ray department. As the new building was being finished WWII began and the hospital lost a portion of its staff, making reorganization necessary. In 1943 the hospital created five main departments: pediatrics; ear, eye, nose and throat; obstetrics; medicine; and surgery. The administration was trying to encourage specialization on the part of the medical staff.

In the late 1940s the President became interested in creating a women's auxiliary group. The first meeting was held in February, 1950. The President wanted the group, which was named the Lawrence General Hospital Aid Association, to focus on public relations and recruiting school nurses. The Association found that it needed more money to be effective and therefore increased its membership and conducted fundraising activities. It then began to function as an auxiliary group to the hospital.

The administration hired a fund-raising firm, which developed a plan to decrease the operating deficit as well as to raise funds so that the administration could expand the hospital, work with the Aid Association to make fundraising more efficient, and develop better public relations activities. By 1955 the hospital had raised \$600,000 and was able to build a new wing.

By 1962 the population in and around Lawrence was again expanding and new highways in the area were expected to increase industrial growth. A new building was created to meet the needs of the residents of Lawrence and the surrounding towns, and included such improvements as 123 new beds and six modern operating rooms. Still more room was needed and another building was built, increasing the number of beds to 355.

By 1974 it was decided to close the nursing school, for nurses were increasingly seeking education at colleges. Since then multiple renovations have been made and new technologies have been acquired. In 2010 the Lawrence General Hospital became affiliated with Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and the Floating Hospital for Children at Tufts Medical Center. By 2011 the hospital had 1,400 employees, 200 volunteers, a 41-bay Emergency Center, a new imaging center, a renovated and expanded pediatric ward, and a Diabetes and Nutrition Education Center.

Sources

Leavitt, Thomas W. *Mill Owners and Missionaries: A History of Lawrence General Hospital*. Lawrence: Lawrence General Hospital, 1975.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of a wide variety of materials relating to the running of the Lawrence General

as well as its promotional activities. The collection includes an almost complete set of annual reports from 1876 to 1987, as well as the minutes of the Executive Board and Board of Trustees meetings, which date between 1892 and 1985. There are a variety of handwritten general ledgers detailing amounts paid and received from different individuals, which date between 1889 and 1941. The collection also contains two bequest ledgers with information about donors, dating between 1891 and 1952. Miscellaneous records include the minutes, activities, bylaws, rules, regulations, and correspondence of various committees of the Ladies' Union Charitable Society and Lawrence General Hospital between 1884 and 1987. There are also miscellaneous promotional materials, publications, employee manuals, guides, and directories that date between 1939 and 2003. There is one scrapbook, dating between 1912 and 1922, that contains the correspondence and minutes of the Hospital Extension Committee. Lastly, there are glass plate negatives, postcards, and negatives of Lawrence General Hospital, its staff, and its fundraising activities, dating between approximately 1906 and 1984.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in nine series: Annual Reports, 1876-1981, 1984-1987; Minutes of the Executive Board Meetings, 1892-1938, 1949-1952; Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meetings, 1952-1985; General Ledgers, 1889-1895, 1900-1904, 1908-1941; Bequest Ledgers, 1891-1952, 1940-1942; Miscellaneous Records, 1884-1987; Miscellaneous Promotional Materials, Publications, Employee Manuals, Guides, and Directories, 1939-2003; Scrapbook of the Hospital Extension Committee, 1912-1922; Images, 1906?-1984.

Series I: Annual Reports, 1876-1981, 1984-1987

Boxes 1-5

This series contains the annual reports of the Ladies' Union Charitable Society and then the Lawrence General Hospital. The reports detail the activities of the hospital, nurses training school, nurses directory, and children's home. They contain financial reports, membership lists, donor lists, and patient statistics, including patient ethnicities and occupations, diseases and diagnoses, and procedures performed. They are arranged chronologically.

Series II: Minutes of the Executive Board Meetings, 1892-1938, 1949-1952

Box 6

This series contains bound books of minutes of the Executive Board meetings of the Ladies' Union Charitable Society and then the Lawrence General Hospital. The minutes, handwritten by the secretaries of the Executive Board, detail attendance at the meetings and votes taken. They include reports from the various officers and committees. They are arranged chronologically.

Series III: Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meetings, 1952-1985

Boxes 7-8

This series consists of bound books of minutes of the Lawrence General Hospital Board of Trustees meetings. The typed minutes detail attendance at the meetings and votes taken. They include reports from the various officers and committees. There are minutes from regular meetings of the Board of Trustees as well as from meetings of various committees and advisory groups. They are arranged chronologically.

Series IV: General Ledgers, 1889-1895, 1900-1904, 1908-1941
Box 9

This series consists of bound books containing handwritten information about amounts paid and received, by date and purpose. They include the name of the individual or business, the item or service rendered, and the amount. They are arranged chronologically.

Series V: Bequest Ledgers, 1891-1952, 1940-1942
Box 9

This series is composed of two bound ledgers. The ledger dating between 1891 and 1952 contains names and, in some cases, excerpts from the wills, of donors to the Ladies' Union Charitable Society/Lawrence General Hospital, as well as the amounts and dates of donations. The ledger dating between 1940 and 1942 includes the names and addresses of donors to the Lawrence General Hospital Campaign, as well as the amounts and dates of donations. The series is arranged chronologically.

Series VI: Miscellaneous Records, 1884-1987
Box 10

This series consists of loose and bound records of the activities conducted by the various committees of the Ladies' Union Charitable Society and Lawrence General Hospital, including those of the Lawrence-Andover Regional Health System under which the hospital was organized in 1985. Included is one folder of typed records and correspondence from the Advisory Board of the Ladies' Union Charitable Society from 1907 to 1951. Other committees represented in this series are: Medical Staff, Nurses Training School, Executive Committee, Extension Committee, Building Committee, Administration Committee, and Medical Club. Types of records include booklets of bylaws, minutes, rules, regulations, recommendations, and correspondence. The series is arranged chronologically by type of committee.

Series VII: Miscellaneous Promotion Materials, Publications, Employee Manuals, Guides, and Directories, 1939-2003
Box 11

This series contains an oversize booklet from 1939 promoting naming opportunities for the hospital expansion, as well as published histories of the Lawrence General Hospital, the nursing school, and the Family Service Association of Lawrence. It also contains employee and volunteer manuals, medical staff directories, and various late 20th and early 21st century marketing materials. The series is arranged chronologically.

Series VIII: Scrapbook of the Hospital Extension Committee, 1912-1922

This series consists of an oversize scrapbook containing minutes and correspondence of the Hospital Extension Committee of the Ladies' Union Charitable Society. It includes two architectural drawings from 1913 and a description of a model built in 1916 by Codman and Desfradelle, Architects, of Boston. The handwritten inscription on the front inside cover says "Beginning in 1912 – Intended to be used for any further growth of the Hospital."

Series IX: Images, 1906?-1984

This series consists of multiple types of images. There are twelve glass plate negatives depicting hospital settings and activities, as well as two books of negatives showing the rehearsal, preparation, and performance of the 1972 Hospital Follies, which was a fundraising activity. The collection also includes two photographs of a groundbreaking ceremony in 1956 and one photograph from a 1984 ultrasound. There are seven postcards depicting outside views of the hospital (one postmarked 1906 and one postmarked 1943, the rest being undated), and one postcard showing a painting by Ralph Fasanella of the Bread and Roses Strike.