

Natl. Jewish Hosp.- Yesterday and Today

At the turn of the century, Denver was a lodestone for fortune seekers looking for riches in the earth. But there were many who came seeking wealth of another kind. Word was getting around that Colorado's high, dry climate contained a magic ingredient...a panacea for respiratory ills including tuberculosis.

Thousands of homeless, jobless and weakened victims streamed West to this frontier town and tragically for many the pilgrimage failed. The sight of these refugees roused the sympathy of Denver's small Jewish community, and typically, they reacted. An action committee was formed.

Led by the town's young Rabbi, William S. Friedman, who was fresh from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, the group swiftly made plans for a hospital that would care for the destitute tuberculosis sufferers, "regardless of creed." By 1892 the cornerstone of the first building had been laid. But the 1893 Silver crisis swept away much of Denver's prosperity and the new hospital was to remain idle for the next seven years leaving many of the TB victims largely uncared for.

A dedicated few, however, remained determined to continue their efforts to open the hospital, including Rabbi Friedman and Louis Anfenger, President of a local B'nai B'rith lodge. Traveling to Toledo, Ohio in 1899 for the District's convention, Anfenger made a dramatic appeal before the organization for support and shortly thereafter B'nai B'rith took on official sponsorship for the hospital.

Money started to pour in from around the country and with an initial fund of \$20,492 the long vacant building was finally ready to open. It was with deep emotion and great pride that Rabbi Friedman, on December 10, 1899, conducted the public Dedication ceremonies. Begun as a hospital of the future, whose motto was enunciated by Rabbi Friedman as "Pain Knows No Creed," its first patient characteristically was a young Catholic girl.

Today, 76 years later, National Jewish Hospital and Research Center at Denver is a highly sophisticated 13-building medical complex -- that still provides a haven for men, women and children from all parts of the U.S. Today, it is able to offer more than shelter or climate. Today, it is a world-famed center for Research which has added much to man's insight and ability to treat disease. And its Education programs serve as tributaries by which the knowledge and methods developed there reach every U.S. and many foreign communities.

Modern treatment methods, many of them developed through the expertise of NJH's own Research and Treatment programs, have cut the death rate dramatically, the treatment time fractionally and the incidence of TB to a very small part of the infectious diseases which attack today's citizens.

Still the 'hospital of the future,' NJH today no longer is confined to the problems of just Tuberculosis. It has broadened its scope to all respiratory ailments, including Asthma, Emphysema, Cystic Fibrosis and more.



MEETING IN 1920 AT DENVER'S NATIONAL JEWISH HOSPITAL WERE RABBI WILLIAM S. FRIEDMAN, LEFT, WHO 40 YEARS EARLIER HAD HELPED ORGANIZE THE INITIAL GROUP, AND MRS. AND COMMODORE LOUIS D. BEAUMONT, WHO DONATED LARGE SUMS OF MONEY ON BEHALF OF NJH AND SUBSEQUENTLY HAD ONE OF THE LARGER BUILDINGS NAMED AFTER HIM.

The importance of NJH's program can be measured when one considers that:

- a) 31-million people in our country suffer from allergic diseases,
- b) 9-million children and adults are victims of asthma.
- c) One family in six has a member partially or wholly disabled by a chronic respiratory disease.

Because such overwhelming numbers are beyond the capacity of a single hospital, the contributions of NJH's Education program are doubly important. There are less than 600 Certified Pediatric Allergists to treat the 5-million Asthmatic children in this country. NJH, which has produced more graduates in this field than any other single medical school, has one of the nation's largest training programs, for this specialty.

During the course of studying allergic Asthma reactions, research scientists at NJH have pursued the possible relationships to the immune system not only in Asthma but also rheumatoid arthritis and cancer. Special Research programs now are in progress at NIH on these ailments and once again members of the medical profession await the results of their findings with great anticipation.

Locally, over 7,000 days of care, most of them free, have been given to Nevada residents at NJH. "Our services are an extension --not a duplication of the medical facilities in this area," explains Saul Bekoff, Director

of the hospital's Western Region.

The Las Vegas Friends of National Jewish Hospital has provided a firm and consistent base of support for the life-saving program of the hospital. Members of the group have included such dignitaries among its active participants as: Charles J. Rich, Dunes Hotel; Nate Adelson, Sunrise Hospital; Jack (Benny) Binion, Binion's Horseshoe Hotel and Casino; Governor Mike O'Callaghan; Cary Grant; Sam A. Boyd, Hotel Nevada and Casino; Burton M. Cohen, Thunderbird Hotel and Casino; Carl Cohen, MGM Grand Hotel; Richard Danner, Sands Hotel and Casino; Don Digilio, Las Vegas Review Journal; Jack Gaughan, El Cortez Hotel; James Hill Fremont Hotel; Jess Hinkle, Del Webb Hotels International and J.K.Houssels, Jr., Union Plaza Hotel.

Others are: Herb Kaufman, Wonder World Stores; Bob Maheu, Leisure Industries of Nevada; Art Marshall, Marshall-Roussio, Inc.; Jack K. Pieper, Frontier Hotel & Casino; Mel Exber, Las Vegas Club Hotel and Casino; M. A. Riddle, Dunes Hotel; Allan D. Sachs; Morris Shenker Dunes Hotel; Maj. Gen. R.G. "Zack" Taylor, First Western Savings Assn; Herb Stout, Valley Bank; Herb L. Tobman, Stardust Hotel & Casino; William S. Weinberger, Caesars Palace Hotel and Casino; Maury Wills; Stephen A. Wynn, Golden Nugget, Inc. and David Zenoff, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Nevada.

"We have every reason to look back with pride in the achievement of the National Jewish Hospital during its first 76 years," says Charles Rich, adding that, "with imaginative leadership and an informed public, I believe this institution has every facility and human resource to surpass those achievements in the future. I believe its contributions will significantly hasten the day when many of our major health problems will be solved and all Americans will enjoy the heritage of health."

For more information on the services or program of the Hospital, interested persons may contact Saul Bekoff, Western Regional offices at 440 North La Brea Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90036, or phone (213) 938-7263.

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