

## THE JOHANNESBURG HOSPITAL

## A HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

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Traces of gold had been discovered from time to time in various parts of the Transvaal during the latter half of the 19th century. The rich conglomerates of the Witwatersrand, however, eluded prospectors until 1886, when the quartzite trails of the previous years led to the epoch-making discovery of the Main Reef series by Walker and Harrison at Langlaagte on the Oosthuizen farm. The glittering prizes hidden in the 'pudding-stone' reefs, sedimented in the lakes and rivers of a bygone geological age, beckoned to all and sundry around the world. The once quiet farming scene soon changed with the arrival of miners, prospectors, traders, labourers and all those who came to seek their fortunes. The Witwatersrand became the Golden Reef and Johannesburg was born.

On 30 October 1886, the farm known as 'Randjeslaagte' was proclaimed by the Government of the Transvaal as the Goldfields of Johannesburg. The boundary limits of this once triangular farm have become historical monuments and may be seen at the northern extremity of East Avenue (Boundary Road), the corner of Commissioner and West Streets, and the corner of Commissioner and End Streets.

The haphazard collection of tents, huts and temporary buildings were soon replaced by more permanent structures as shops, office accommodation and residential premises were erected.

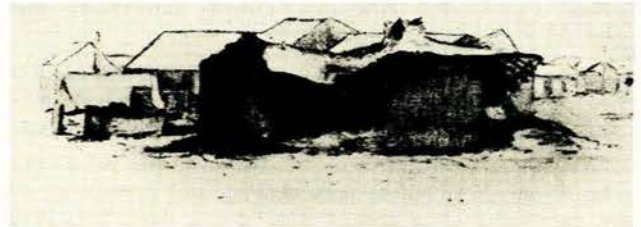


The first camp

The rapid increase in population associated with the prevailing primitive living conditions soon highlighted the need for hospital services. Inadequate sanitary facilities led to the ravages of dysentery and typhoid, while smallpox and plague were threats soon to be faced by the community. The icy blasts of the Highveld winter took their toll. Early methods of mining were hazardous and accidents were frequent. The rough and ready atmosphere of the times fostered violence and assault.

According to the earliest available records, the sick and injured were housed in the gaol, situated in Commissioner Street near the Height's Hotel. The first patient was apparently a Thomas Gray, who was 'looked after most attentively by the gaoler, Barend Bruhn'. He was suffering from an 'infection of the stomach' and died on 4 Novem-

ber 1886, the first recorded death among the diggers on the Rand.



The Gaol Hospital

*Dr. H. Sauer*

Dr. H. Sauer, who had left his busy practice in Kimberley to settle in Johannesburg, was an outstanding personality of the time. Besides practising medicine, he took an active part in the affairs of the Diggers' Committee, becoming its first chairman. In addition, he was appointed by the Government to be the district surgeon for the town. The following passage from Dr. Sauer's book *Ex Afrika* describes the atmosphere of the times:

'The town of Johannesburg rose almost in a night. Immediately after the sale of the stands buildings sprang up in all directions—mud hovels, tin shanties, brick and stone erections hustled each other in picturesque confusion. Many of them served their purposes for only a few months before being pulled down and replaced by better buildings.

'Height's Hotel was run up in Commissioner Street in a fairly substantial way and did a roaring business. Almost opposite it in the same street the Government had hastily constructed a jail and hospital, consisting entirely of mud and wooden poles. It was in this primitive building that I performed a major surgical operation on a native who had had one arm badly crushed by a wagon wheel passing over it. When I saw the patient, I found that mortification had already reached almost up to the shoulder joint and an operation for the moment was out of the question. The patient was put to bed with his injured arm lying in water for some days, until the limit of mortification was defined. This having shown itself at about the articulation of the humerus with the scapula, I decided to remove by operation the entire arm and the scapula to which it was attached. I was assisted by Colonel Ferreira, who, under my directions, administered the chloroform. The operation was entirely successful, the patient leaving the hospital six weeks afterwards minus an arm and a shoulder blade, but otherwise well.'

The unsatisfactory state of the Gaol 'Hospital' in these very early days of the Camp's history is documented in a letter written by a Rev. F. H. Fisher to the Sanitary Board. 'The whole thing', he wrote, 'is a dis-



Dr. Sauer

grace to a civilized town. In an unkempt and brick-floored room opening immediately into the courtyard of the gaol are a dozen bedsteads upon which lie sundry patients, white and native, young and old. In this filthy den comfort is unheard of and decency unknown . . . I am reliably informed that contagious and non-contagious cases are mixed in this terrible den.'

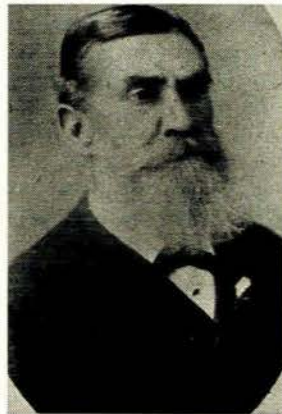
#### *Early Hospital Facilities*

The demands of the public, which followed on the exposure of these unsatisfactory conditions, stimulated the Magistrate, Captain Von Brandis, to assist the growing village.

Feeling that urgent action was necessary, he purchased a galvanized iron and wooden building for the sum of £85. He was obliged to do this without the necessary authority since a man was seriously ill in the prison and there were two other patients. He sought authorization for the purchase in April 1887. The sum of £105 was granted by the Republican Government, an additional £20 being allocated to provide a wooden floor. The building was 10 feet high by 20 feet long by 16 feet broad. It is presumed that this building was erected on the Commissioner Street Gaol site or adjacent to it.

In June of the same year, authority was asked for the appointment of a Superintendent at a salary of £7.10s. per month, since it was considered unsatisfactory to allow the gaolers to continue to look after patients because 'they went out at night and drank'. This appointment was not approved on the grounds of cost.

A public meeting of diggers and others made strong representations to the authorities asking for better hospital facilities. The Government later granted a piece of ground situated on the north side of the town for the erection of a hospital, and in addition contributed a sum of £500 towards the building. A subscription list was started by H. Sauer and J. B. Robinson, names now well documented in the history of Johannesburg.



Captain Von Brandis

The Johannesburg Hospital Board with Governmental representation was constituted, and met for the first time on 15 March 1888 in the office of the Gold Commissioner under the chairmanship of Mr. W. St. John Carr. Members present were Messrs. Birbeek, Kaufman, Morkel, Quin, Deecker and Hancock. A motion was adopted to the effect that a temporary hospital should be commenced without delay, and a sub-committee was set up to take the matter further.

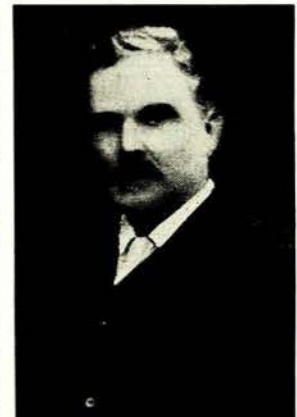
The Hospital Board was fortunate to have as its first Chairman a man of the calibre of Mr. St. John Carr. After service in the Cape Government Railways, he came to the Johannesburg Goldfields and soon became a prominent figure in the mining industry. He interested himself in many aspects of public life, becoming the first Mayor of Johannesburg in 1903. He received a knighthood in recognition of his services to South Africa. He died in the Kensington Sanatorium in 1928.

On 11 April 1888, the tender of Messrs. Foster and Mitchell for £758 for the temporary hospital was accepted, on condition that they undertook to complete the work in 2 months. The temporary hospital, 'a little brick-lined shanty', accommodating 14 patients, was formally opened on 1 August 1888 by Captain Von Brandis.

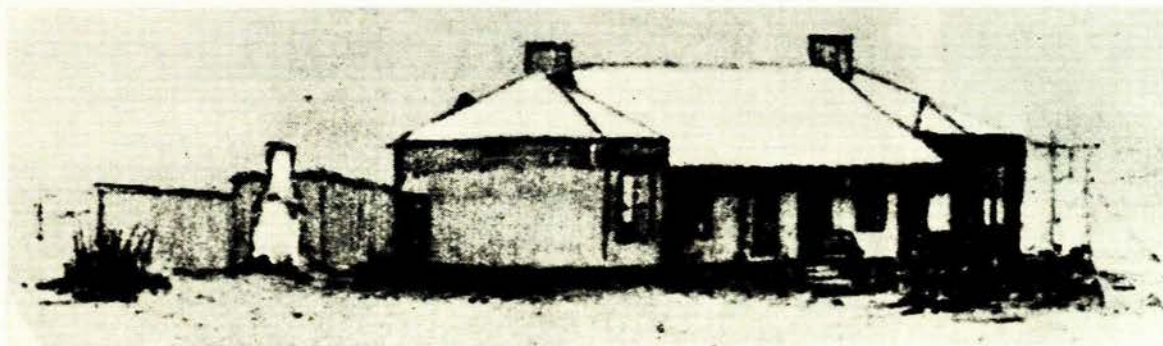
In September 1888, the Native Hospital was started in a tent containing 8 beds, sited behind the temporary hospital, while in March 1889, the wards for women and children were completed, providing an additional 14 beds.

Realizing the inadequacy of the accommodation provided by the temporary hospital, the Board proceeded diligently towards its goal of building a larger permanent hospital. On 29 March 1889 General N. J. Smit, then Vice-President of the South African Republic, laid the foundation stone of the first permanent hospital.

An intriguing story surrounds this foundation stone. On 29 October 1935 a Johannesburg newspaper carried



Mr. St. John Carr



The Temporary Hospital — 1888

an interesting article on the 'Mystery of the hospital foundation stone'. The occasion was its removal for replacement in the new Ronald Mackenzie Block, when it was found that the cavity below it, in which coins and newspapers had been inserted at the ceremony of 1889, was empty. It is interesting to record that the theft of these articles had been discovered soon after the stone had been laid. The Board minutes of 10 July 1889 read: 'The Chairman reported that the Clerk of Works has informed him that the foundation stone of the permanent hospital had been removed and the bottle containing the coins and papers stolen.' It was resolved: 'That a reward of £25 (subscribed by members of the Board) be offered for the apprehension and conviction of the person or persons who removed the foundation stone and abstracted the coins deposited underneath.' The value of the coins was £1.16s.3d. It is presumed that the reward was never claimed and the identity of the thief or thieves remains a mystery.

#### *The Permanent Hospital of 1890*

The permanent hospital of 1890 was erected on the site provided by the Government and on which today stands the Ronald Mackenzie Block.

A very colourful opening ceremony was performed by the Hon. J. M. A. Wolmarans, Member of the Executive Council of the South African Republic, who officiated on behalf of the President. The following description of the official opening of the Johannesburg Hospital appeared in the *Diggers' News* on 6 November 1890:

'The opening ceremony of the new Johannesburg Hospital took place yesterday afternoon. A general invitation had been sent by means of the Press, and was cordially responded to by the inhabitants of the town. Long before the advertised time—three o'clock—the gentle slope in front of the hospital buildings began to fill with people anxious to witness the ceremony, and troops of children, representing all the schools in town, formed long processions along the roads leading towards the Hospital Hill.

'Preparations for the joyful event had been made on an extensive scale; the front of the new building was decorated with flags and foliage and presented a particularly attractive appearance. A canopy, supported on poles clad in verdure, composed of bunting and surmounted by 4 appropriate flags, bearing the Geneva cross on a white field, was erected above the rampart leading to the main entrance.

'From the windows floated many coloured flags, representing not only a number of nations, but several private companies as well. Among them were moreover a few flags belonging to the set adopted for the so-called "international code of signalling". From the flagstaff on the centre turret floated the four-coloured flag of the Republic. Entrance to the ground was by the central gate, above which floated four flags, two of the S.R. Republic, one Union Jack, and a tricoloured emblem of the French Republic. Between them they supported a shield bearing the following inscription: *Cives Urbis Johannesburgiae Hominibus in valetudine affecto.*

'Towards three o'clock the crowd assembled in front of the new hospital augmented every moment, and it was found difficult at last to reserve an open space for admission to the inner circle. There a detachment of police was drawn up, extending on each side of the banisters of the rampart, in single file, armed with Martini-Henri carbines. These weapons were continually employed in shouldering and presenting, exercises for which purpose they are better adapted than truncheons. In the centre of the crowd, and facing the hospital, shone the national motto *Eendragt maakt magt*, executed in white on a crimson field, and supported by two school boys.

'Shortly before three o'clock the assembled multitude, now numbering about 4,000 persons, was agitated by the arrival of the brass band of the Wanderers' Club, who took up their position to the left of the main entrance, and beguiled the tedium of waiting with a few spirited tunes. During that time, the Members of the Hospital Board, Messrs. J. F. de Beer, St. J. Carr, C. J. Serrurier, J. Tudhope, W. J. Quin, F. Hancock, W. H. Rogers, J. Morkel and A. Levy made their appearance, and took their station on the rampart. There they were joined by Dr. Cecil Schultz, the District Surgeon, and several ladies, as well as the members of the Press. A few minutes later the Hon. J. M. A. Wolmarans arrived, accompanied by Commandant Schutte, Lieut. Heugh, and others, and was conducted to a place under the canopy above referred to, by the members of the Hospital Board. The band in the meantime struck up the Volkslied, and the police detachment presented arms.'

The Chairman welcomed Mr. Wolmarans and his party and, after extending a vote of thanks to the Government for their 'liberal support in the building of the hospital', went on to say:

'The number of beds at the disposal of the public is now about 130. This includes the accommodation provided (in separate buildings of course) for Kaffirs and coloured people.

'The whole of the work, temporary and permanent, has been carried out at a cost of about £42,000; out of which the Government have contributed £1,500, and lent £30,000. In addition to this the Board are daily expecting a further loan from the Government of £3,000 to enable them to pay off a few remaining outstanding liabilities.

'With regard to the future of the Institution, the Board have every reason to hope that they will be able to meet all charges for maintenance out of the fees and donations received from the public, and the subsidy now granted by the Government.'

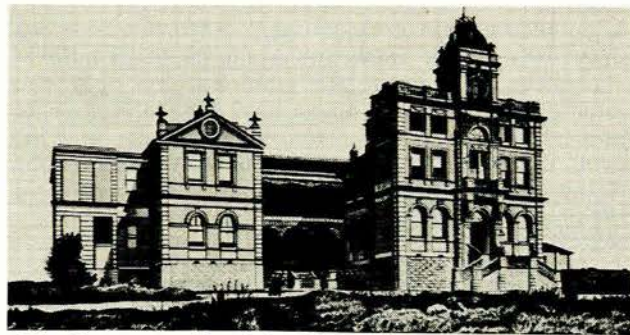
In his reply, Mr. Wolmarans expressed the opinion that 'To assist the infirm and sick characterizes the noble work of a Christian, and what has been given for the erection and maintenance of this building will bear its blessed results. "What is given to the poor, is lent to the Lord". There is another task which requires greater sacrifices than voluntary contributions. I allude to the nurses of this institution. Theirs is indeed no easy task. Their faithful services cannot be rewarded with money. The physician might prescribe with care, but in most cases you will find that recovery is due to careful nursing. Often the kindly hand that has ministered to the suffering patient has been blessed, and when we eulogize those who have laboured and have contributed their money to the erection of this hospital, we must never lose sight of the noble self-sacrifice of the nurse. There is another good feature in connection with this institution, that is that it is undenominational, and if there is anything calculated to strengthen the bond of unity and fellow-feeling amongst us, the hospital must be considered an important factor.'

After further speeches, the key of the hospital was presented to Mr. Wolmarans, who opened the door. He was then conducted over the new building, which is described as follows:

'The outer view of the hospital is well known to all of us, with its handsome front of red brick picked out with stone, but as one comes nearer to the building, one cannot but be struck with the grand position that has been chosen so well suited for a hospital. The air is beautifully fresh, while the view over the town and the surrounding country is extensive.

'A double flight of stone steps leads up to the main entrance, at which there is a main door and a pair of swinging glass doors through which one enters a very handsome and lofty corridor, running the whole length of the building and crossed at right angles by a still wider corridor running the length of the wings of the building.

'The first room on the right-hand side is the waiting room for patients; opposite is the resident surgeon's consulting room, fitted with the most complete set of newest surgical instruments. The next room on the same side of the corridor is the dispensary where the medicines are distributed to the outdoor patients; beyond these rooms



The Permanent Hospital (1890) without the Eastern Wing

are the private wards, fine lofty rooms, well furnished with an electric call bell. In these wards you first notice the Sheringham ventilators, with which the whole hospital is fitted, there being an inlet ventilator close to the head of the bed and the outlet ventilator of mica (or talc) is fixed into the wall close to the ceiling. Close to the foot of the stairs is to be noticed the very complete set of electric bells, and examined closely it is seen that by a neat arrangement the electric bell does not ring during the night, but simply makes a little rapping sound that can

only be heard by the porter in attendance.

'In the corridor, close to each ward, stands a glass case in which all the necessary medicines for the ward are kept. In every corridor, too, is noticed the precautions against fire, more than ample to dispel any apprehension of disaster from this source, there being hand grenades and Sinclair's patent "Leona Extincteur"; and as an additional safeguard, a patent canvass shoot (fire escape), easily adjustable, is provided in addition to the other exits for the assistance of patients on the second floor.

'There are eight wards on the ground floor of the new building, with accommodation for 50 beds; the upper storey consists of eleven wards with about the same number of beds. The wards are divided into male and female wards, while separate wards are also set aside for children. Then there are the surgical wards, native wards, paying and non-paying wards and private wards for patients of both sexes.

'After the opening ceremony, the temporary hospital will be set apart entirely for native patients, as soon as the white patients can be moved into the permanent building. The wards are all lofty rooms, furnished well, with handsome fireplaces, all the windows are fitted with venetian blinds. A large number of beds in the wards are fitted, in addition to the ordinary spring mattress, with a patent self-lifting apparatus, by means of which the patient can be propped up without the aid of additional pillows and so forth. All sorts of wheeling chairs, reading desks and other appliances for the use and conveniences of patients are provided. There are on the first floor two convalescent rooms with a cheerful bright view over the town, fitted up with bookshelves and with games such as bagatelle, backgammon, chess, etc., in which the patients who are able to leave their beds can pass their time. Each ward is fitted with a bathroom where hot and cold water will be laid on. The closets are so arranged that though close to the wards they are perfectly separate, the brickwork being separated by some three feet from the main building.

'The wards for women are placed on the first floor, and in the west wing of the building, close to them, are the children's wards fitted up with cosy little cots. The third floor is used as a store room. All the corridors are covered with a cork carpeting, both silent and pleasant to walk upon. The handsome staircase is fitted with indiarubber noiseless treads, and there is besides a large substantial kitchen lift. At the back of the main building, but connected with it by a covered way, is the kitchen with a stove capable of cooking for 300 persons. All the arrangements for boilers and tanks are most perfect, and special attention must be drawn to the splendid ventilation everywhere. The pantries and linen rooms will delight the eyes of mater familias. The nurses' quarters attached to the linen room are most complete, including the Sisters' chapel, the general dormitory, the night nurses' sleeping rooms, the refectory, sitting room, and at the end of the building the matron's own little private bedroom and drawing room.'

The *Mining Argus* of 6 November 1890, had this to say about the theatre:

'In close proximity to the surgical ward is the operating room, by no means the least important portion of the building

in the eyes of a medical man. Within is a surgical table of the most approved model, which, however, one does not care to contemplate too long.'

The people of Johannesburg, too, were eager to inspect their new hospital. 'As soon as the doors were opened, the public were admitted, and the building was in a few minutes filled to overflowing. A few of the more enterprising spirits assayed the lift, but found it to work with some difficulty. Others flooded the apartments in the lower storey, and admired the beds, the telephones, the arrangements for extinguishing fires, and the appointment of the rooms generally. There was a continuous chain of people ascending and descending the stairs, and the first-floor apartments were subjected to a thorough inspection.

'Refreshments had been provided on a liberal scale. The ladies who had become thirsty during their investigations, returned to the central ward in the old buildings, where cheering cups, inebriating and otherwise, were freely partaken of by them. Above the door shone the inscription "Welcome" and on the opposite wall the legend "Lang leve onze President".'

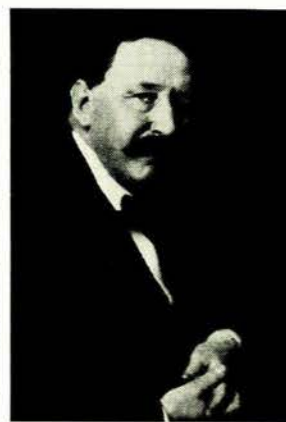
'For the male part of creation there was a liberal supply of champagne, brandy, whiskey, beer and aerated waters, dispensed in one of the wardrooms in the new building. From the press of applicants for one or the other of these beverages, it would appear as though the whole masculine population of Johannesburg had been present at the opening of the Hospital.'

#### *Medical and Nursing Staff*

Before the opening of the permanent hospital, the staff consisted of an 'honorary visiting medical staff' of 4 members. The first members were Drs. Maclean, Duirs, Veitch and Melle.

At the time of the opening of the permanent hospital, however, the medical staff consisted of Drs. Davies, Maclean, Wassidlo and Murray, with the district surgeon, Dr. Schultz, *ex officio*. Dr. John van Niekerk was appointed as first 'Resident Surgeon and Dispenser' and assumed duty on 1 November 1889, at a salary of '£500 per annum, with quarters, but no private practice allowed'. Dr. van Niekerk had qualified in Edinburgh as Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Surgery in 1888.

The first nurses employed in the Johannesburg Hospital were members of the Order of the Holy Family of Bordeaux. The Matron was the outstanding personality, Mother Adele. From a total of 4 in 1888, the nursing establishment was increased to 15 with the opening of the permanent hospital in 1890. The Matron received £7 per month and the nursing sisters were each paid £3.10s. per month. That these dedicated women were held in high esteem by the citizens of Johannesburg is evident from the following expression of gratitude which appeared in the *Diggers' News* of 6



Dr. van Niekerk

November 1890, on the day following the opening of the permanent hospital:

'Luckily for those who have had the privilege of being restored to health under its sheltering walls, an efficient staff of nurses were secured in the very earliest days of its existence. Ladies who had given up their lives to charity and good works were found who preferred, although of cloistered faith, to live apart from the world, yet of it, and to bestow their kindness and patience, and knowledge of nursing without stint, and with no hope of reward other than their own clear conscience in well doing. To these ladies a tribute of thankfulness is due, and although their work may be in the background, and not brought forward for special pronouncement, their kindness will live in the grateful remembrance of those who, making their acquaintance in sickness, have left it with the blessings of restored health.'

As the work of the hospital increased, the Nursing Sisters of the Holy Family were unable to meet the demands of an increasing number of patients. Dr. van Niekerk went overseas to Europe on behalf of the Board to recruit 'lay' nursing personnel and several additional sisters emigrated to Johannesburg as a result. The need for providing training facilities for nurses soon became apparent. The Board accepted the principle of employing probationer nurses in 1895, but before enrolling any for training the whole matter of the nursing staff establishment was reviewed. The first application for such training was received from a



Mother Adele

Miss Brink in 1896. The appointment of a lay Nursing Superintendent soon followed in the person of Miss E. Young.

The nursing services of the Hospital in the early 1900s continued to be provided by the lay sisters and 25 members of the Holy Order, assisted by a growing number of probationers. The religious Sisters fell under the jurisdiction of the Matron, Mother Adele, while the lay nursing staff were responsible to Miss Young and later Mrs. F. Magill. As the demand for nursing services increased, the dual system became unrealistic and the Catholic Sisters ceased their long and devoted association with the Hospital in 1915.

This Sisterhood had been associated with the Hospital since its inception in 1888, and 'eloquent testimony is recorded of the high esteem in which they were held and of the severe loss sustained by the institution and by the Johannesburg community when they left to take up their residence at the Monastery in Sea Point, Cape Town'. It is of interest to record that the original quarters occupied by the Sisters of the Holy Family, including the walls of the small chapel where they gathered to worship, are still recognizable within the precincts of what is today the Physiotherapy Department. The first lay Matron was Miss Borthwick.

The growing population strained the hospital accommodation, and the Hospital Board continued its efforts to increase the number of beds. The Eastern Wing was com-

pleted and opened in 1893 by the Chairman of the Hospital Board, Sir W. St. John Carr. A generous donation from the Rand financier, Barney Barnato, provided the Barnato Wing, containing two large wards,



The Hospital (1893)

which was completed in 1897. The total number of beds had now reached 320.

The tide of the South African War seems to have passed over the Hospital without disturbing it unduly. The atmosphere of the days before the military occupation are captured by the comments of Nurse Norrie, one of the first group of probationers to be trained at the Hospital. She writes:

'My life as a probationer was a very full and happy one. The work, though very hard, was full of interest, and the companionship of other girls, mostly about my own age and all regarding nursing as our vocation in life, is something of priceless memory.

'Our association was broken up when the South African War started. War having been declared on 22 October 1899, the nurses were gathered together with Miss Young, our Matron, and addressed by a German doctor, who had taken over duty as Superintendent (the staff of English doctors having left and been replaced by Government officials). He told us that our services were no longer required as it was intended to employ only those women whose loyalty would be unquestioned.

'We would be given safe conduct if we wished to leave which we all decided to do. So on the last train to leave Johannesburg for Delagoa Bay before the railway lines were destroyed, the English nurses left in a body, about 50 of us with our Matron.

'That evening the platform at Park Station was crowded with friends and well-wishers.

'It was tremendously exciting, if rather sad. Gifts of sweets, biscuits, fruit and even wines and beer, were handed into our crowded compartments.

'A touching incident occurred just before the train moved out—a man ran on to the platform shouting for "The little nurse who bought a portmanteau from me this morning" and when he found her, he insisted on returning the purchase money.

'On arrival at Delagoa Bay we were met and cared for by a receptive committee who found us accommodation for the night. We left for Durban in the little old *Raglan Castle* crowded beyond capacity with refugees from the Transvaal.'

After the Anglo-Boer War, the need for increased facilities remained acute and the hospital continued to grow. 1904 saw the opening by Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein of the 'Stroyan Block', named for the man whose gift of a large sum of money made this building possible.

In 1905 a historic event occurred with the appointment of the first Medical Superintendent in the person of Dr. Ronald Mackenzie. He had graduated at the University of Edinburgh, and on the cessation of hostilities in the



Dr. Mackenzie

Anglo-Boer War he was appointed district surgeon to Johannesburg. He took up his duties as Superintendent in 1905 and occupied the post until his retirement in 1928. He continued with clinical work becoming interested in dermatology, and practised in the hospital as well as consulting in the town.

At this period the name of another outstanding figure, Miss B. G. Alexander, appears in the record. Her personality and character dominated nursing affairs (and others!) of the Hospital

for many years. Her name in discussion is mentioned with reverence and awe by those who were privileged to know her. She joined the staff in 1904, becoming Matron in 1916, which post she held until 1931. She died on 26 July 1949, and to quote from an obituary notice: 'By her passing the Hospital has lost one of its staunchest friends, and the Nursing Profession one of its greatest leaders.'

The next person to assume the responsible office of Matron of the General Hospital was Mrs. B. J. Hofmeyr, who succeeded Miss Alexander in 1931. Mrs. Hofmeyr had the distinction of later being designated the first Matron-in-Chief of the Johannesburg Hospital.

#### Expansion

During the years 1905 to 1924, the Hospital expanded steadily. The East and West Pavilions on either side of the Permanent Hospital were erected, each containing an operating theatre. It is of interest to note that a sum of £10,000 was received from the South African Railways towards the cost of 'Pavilion No. 1', on condition that provision would always be made for 35 railway patients. Additions to the nurses' home, an outpatients building, a laundry, a power house and a house for the medical superintendent were completed. Medical staff quarters, a dispensary block and a central kitchen were built as the hospital faced the demands of a growing population.

The first Branch Hospital to be taken under the wing of the Johannesburg Hospital Board was the Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital. This institution had been started by the Guild of Loyal Women in a house in

Doornfontein in 1904. In 1906 it was transferred to its present site in Milner Park, and in 1913 it was taken over by the Transvaal Provincial Administration.

In 1915 the millionaire financier, Sir Otto Beit, donated his beautiful mansion 'Hohenheim', situated on the Parktown Ridge, to the Johannesburg Hospital for the purpose of housing convalescent patients. The Hospital had acquired its second branch, to be known as the 'Otto Beit Convalescent Home'.

The need for an institution for the isolation of infectious diseases became imperative. Negotiations took place between the Municipal Council, the Provincial Administration and the Johannesburg Hospital Board, as a result of which the Fever Hospital was completed and opened in 1916.

Sir Julius Jeppe, one of the public-spirited mining magnates and one-time Chairman of the Hospital Board, bequeathed a large sum of money to provide the pavilion which was opened in 1919 and which bears his name.

An important challenge which faced the hospital during this period was the outbreak of the influenza epidemic of 1918, which hit Johannesburg with force. The limited facilities of the Hospital were inadequate to cope with the emergency. Temporary 'hospitals' were therefore opened in the Twist Street and Hospital Hill Schools, the Soldiers' Rest Room and certain of the gold mines in the vicinity. These 'hospitals' were administered by the Johannesburg Hospital, which also provided nurses for work in the country districts most severely affected. Again in 1922, the Hospital faced a 'crisis' when 327 cases, severely injured in the revolt, were admitted for treatment in the space of 10 days.

#### Laboratory Services

Concurrent with the growth of the Hospital in the early 1900s was the development of the laboratory services which it has enjoyed. In the early days at the end of the Anglo-Boer War, a Government Laboratory in a little wood and iron building at the corner of De Korte and Hospital Streets was available for the medical profession. The expansion of the mining industry soon brought to the fore the medical problems of gold mining. In 1912 the South African Institute for Medical Research was established, subsidized by the Government and the Chamber of Mines. Research and Routine Divisions were set up, and the Institute rendered service to Provincial, Municipal and Government bodies, as well as to private practitioners. The Hospital over the years continued to benefit from these services. Each institution grew with the help of the other. The hospital is indebted to the pioneers of the SAIMR, and during the period under review the names of Dr. W. Watkins-Pitchford and Sir F. Spencer-Lister are recorded in gratitude for their assistance as Directors of the Institute.

The need for a more comprehensive system of education for nurses became apparent, and in October 1921, the first preliminary training school for nurses in the Transvaal was opened. Miss Mary Milne was the first Tutor and her deputy was Miss M. Banfield. The School was situated on the corner of Hospital and Esselen Streets, opposite the Non-European Hospital. Three two-storey houses were altered to provide residential quarters and classrooms.



Miss Alexander

### Medical School

The movement for the establishment of the Medical School in Johannesburg was initiated by the Council of the Witwatersrand Branch of the British Medical Association at a general meeting of registered medical practitioners of the Transvaal held on 7 April 1916. In 1919 discussions took place between the University authorities and the Hospital Board leading to the provision of clinical facilities for medical students in 1921. The handful of students who first walked the Hospital were privileged to have as their teachers Professor O. K. Williamson (Medicine), Professor G. Ritchie-Thomson (Surgery) and Professor W. Gordon-Grant (Obstetrics and Gynaecology). All three were 'honorarys' on the hospital staff, giving part-time service for hospital patients. In addition they carried on busy consultant private practices in the town. These outstanding men brought to the Hospital and the Medical School the methods and philosophies of the London and Edinburgh Medical Schools. The traditions of Boerhaave in stressing the importance of bedside instruction thus were continued here.

*Professor Williamson* is remembered for his erudition and his vast knowledge of the general medicine of the times, with especial interest in chest diseases. His gentle unassuming manner endeared him to patients, students and staff. His ward rounds were apparently marathons beginning at 9 a.m. and ending after noon. Each symptom and sign was conscientiously assessed and discussed. Trained in the traditions of the London Schools, he brought to Johannesburg a sound approach in the practice of the medical specialty. Although a frail-looking person, he continued athletic activities all his life. He was a member of the Alpine Club of Europe and a mountaineer of repute. He was a skilled oarsman and assisted the Witwatersrand University Rowing Club in coaching its crews.

*Professor Ritchie-Thomson* was a person of impressive personality with considerable charm of manner. He was a highly competent and wise surgeon. His teaching was vital and coloured by the practical common sense of his Scottish tradition. An innate shyness and humility occasionally led him to avoid the crowded lecture theatre; the bedside and operating theatre being more to his liking.

His dry humour has been the source of many anecdotes. One story told by the students of his day perhaps highlights a facet of his character. When appointed to the Chair, his enthusiastic and somewhat staid ward sister was uncertain as to how to address him. After a round one morning, she put her problem to him in the duty room. Which of his titles would be correct and proper for her to use? He gazed at her for only a moment with the ghost of a twinkle in his eyes, and said in the Scottish accent so well known to his students: 'Some people call me Professor, some call me Doctor, and yet others address me as Mr. Ritchie-Thomson; Sister, you can call me George!', with which he scuttled out of the Ward.

*Professor Gordon-Grant*, 'G.G.', occupied the Chair of Obstetrics and Gynaecology until December 1938. His immaculate skill in the theatre, with ungloved hands dipped in iodine, was a joy to watch. His enthusiastic and confident manner in ward rounds and demonstrations was unhandicapped by nurses and students. A great teacher, a wise practitioner and an imposing character, he did much for his specialty in both the General Hospital and the 'Queen Vic' Maternity Hospital. The aroma of his cigars, we are told, still wafts down the duty rooms and corridors to stir the memories of his students and colleagues.

### Students

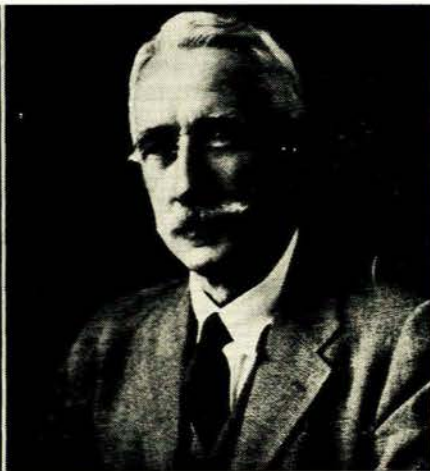
Not unexpectedly, the invasion of the wards by the medical students was not regarded by all the ward sisters as a boon or a blessing. The patients, too, did not always readily accept the immature examinations of the students. However, the growing pains of this time soon healed, assisted by the wisdom, tact and persuasive power of Dr. Mackenzie. The students became part of the wards and clinics, and the clinical training for the Witwatersrand Degree of M.B., B.Ch. continued smoothly. The vision and drive of Prof. R. A. Dart, who as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine Board watched over the growth of the new School, had an outstanding influence on the organization and achievements of the School. Additional staff, laboratory accommodation, lecture theatres and clinic rooms for student use were provided as funds enabled building programmes to continue.



Prof. Williamson



Prof. Ritchie-Thomson



Prof. Gordon-Grant

### *Transvaal Memorial Hospital for Children*

1923 saw the opening of the Transvaal Memorial Hospital for Children, the money for which had been raised by public subscription, as a living memorial to those who fell in the 1914-1918 War. The chief subscribers were:

- The late Mrs. Louisa Beck.
- The Municipal Council of Johannesburg.
- The S.A. Gifts and Comforts (Governor-General's Fund).
- The S.A. Red Cross.
- Julius and Elizabeth Berlein.
- The members of the *Sunday Times* Children's Corner, per Aunt Smada (Miss A. M. Adams).
- Members of the Theatrical and Musical Professions.

### *Non-European Hospital*

In 1925, the Non-European Hospital, sited on part of the grounds of the Johannesburg Fort at the northern end of Hospital Street, was opened by the Administrator of the Transvaal, Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr. Bed accommodation for 183 patients was provided, as well as a nurses' home, two operating theatres, an X-ray and physiotherapy department. The Johannesburg Hospital now boasted a total of 910 beds.

### *Financial Arrangements*

At this point it may be of interest to note how the financial arrangements of the Johannesburg Hospital and the powers vested in its Board have varied over the years. From 1888 to 1900 the revenues were derived from Native pass registration fees, from Government grants and subsidies, from patients' fees and from voluntary contributions. The early Boards were elected by the public, and the Government appointed representatives. This type of Board functioned until the Anglo-Boer War, when the Board was appointed by the British Military authorities. A slight change in constitution occurred in 1906, and in 1908 the Government proclaimed the 'Johannesburg Hospital Committee', with Mr. J. N. van den Berg as Chairman. All the members were appointed by the Government. After the Act of Union in 1910, the Provincial Government became responsible for hospitals and elected representatives to the Board. Since then various Ordinances, re-orientating the powers of the Board and methods of hospitalization, have been enacted. It is of interest to note that for a short period (1915-1917) the Johannesburg Municipality assumed financial control of the Hospital. In 1928 a Public Hospitals' Ordinance was passed, providing for a Provincial subsidy and allowing the Hospital Boards considerable powers of self-government. The Hospital Board in the 1930s had wide and effective representation, viz., the Provincial Administration, the Honorary Medical Staff, the Johannesburg City Council, the University of the Witwatersrand, the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce, the Transvaal Agricultural Union, and the contributors to the hospital funds.

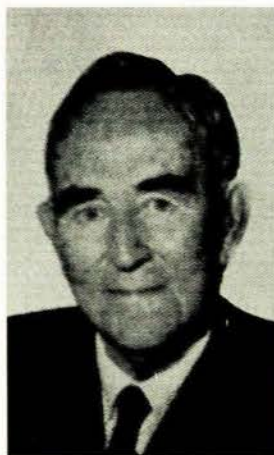
The 1920s and 1930s saw rapid expansion of the Hospital's activities. As medical knowledge increased, so the need for specialist services became apparent, and medical appointments were made accordingly. This period, too, saw the development of the paramedical services. In reading about the staff and its work in the past, we are conscious of our inability, in the space available, to pay fitting tribute to those who have gone before. It is a task

which will one day be done suitably in memory of the scores of persons of the medical, administrative, nursing, clerical and technical sections whose contributions have added to the Hospital's stature and achievements. We believe, however, even at the risk of failing to do justice to all, that to revive the names and personalities of some of the many who have worked in the Hospital will be appreciated, particularly by the people alive today who themselves came into touch with these men and women, either as patients, as students, as nurses, as colleagues or as members of the public.

### *Persons in the Hospital's History*

In medicine, the names of Bensusan, Bloom, Watt, Braun, Heiman, Girdwood, Mary Gordon and Balkin are recalled from the record. In surgery, Daly, Davies, Murray, Van Niekerk, Welchman, Levin, MacGregor, Douglas and Dauth pass through the wards and theatres of the past. I. P. Schabort, Abelheim and Te Water recall the obstetrics and gynaecology of the General and the 'Vic'. Brinton, Napier and Temple-Thurston watch over the ophthalmological work. Paediatrics does honour to Baumann, Blieden, Ross and B. Melle. F. P. Fouche and Edelstein stride in the van of orthopaedics, Loeser of 'fevers'; Alice Cox and Geerling of neuropsychiatry; Mudd and Weinbren of anaesthetics; Orenstein of 'tropicals'; MacNab, Campbell and Pink of ENT; Temple-Mursell and Maisels of urology; Stewart, Olivier and Charlton of radiology, and Woolf of physical medicine. These names selected from the 'honoraries' of the times will recall to many of our readers their years of devoted service to the Johannesburg Hospital. To them we owe a debt of gratitude and thanks for their work in treating the sick and injured as well as their instructing help to generations of nurses and medical students.

Other persons of these earlier years in the Hospital's history, whose names are written indelibly in the record, require recognition here. Many Chairmen of the Board have added their wisdom and judgements through the years, and the following names come to mind: St. John Carr, O'Meara, Fricker, Soutter and Jeppe. More recently, Mr. G. W. Nelson and Mr. H. Solomon appear on the scene. Their work on the Board and its various committees has been of inestimable value to the Hospital. Their skill in mobilizing the public to assist the Hospital's cause cannot be over-emphasized. Mr. Solomon continued, as Chairman from 1930 to 1955, to guide the affairs of the Board, and



Mr. Solomon

to the end he staunchly fought for the retention of executive powers for Boards. His memory is entrenched in the Hugh Solomon Hall in the Nurses' Home at the General Hospital.



Dr. A. Louw succeeded Dr. Mackenzie as Superintendent and occupied the post from 1928 to 1945, when he retired. The next Superintendent, Dr. K. F. Mills, enters our story at this stage with his appointment as Assistant



Dr. Louw



Dr. Mills

Superintendent in 1930. Drs. Louw and Mills saw many significant changes in the constitution and functions of the Hospital during the 1930s. Their administrative skill amidst the controversial issues of the period contributed in no small measure to the progress of the institution. Their appreciation of the role of the University's contribution to the stature of the Hospital assisted in making the partnership more congenial. Dr. Mills, particularly, will be remembered for his wise counsel in fostering the cause of education of medical students, paramedical students and nurses. The Province and the Medical School are deeply indebted to him for his work.

We pay tribute at this point, too, to members of the non-medical and non-nursing staff whose contribution has been significant, e.g. Messrs. Nash, MacMurray and Barnes of the Secretariat; Mr. Crawford and Mr. Burr, the pharmacists; Mr. Oliver of the Engineer's Department; Mr. Cohen of 'outpatients', feared and respected by generations of patients; and Mrs. Pericho of the Physiotherapy Department.

The final significant phase of development of the Hospital's history over its first 50 years was the influence of the successors to the Clinical Chairs. Professor W. H. Craib in Medicine, Professor I. W. Brebner in Surgery and Professor J. Black in Obstetrics and Gynaecology came to office in the 1930s. Under their influence, the academic development of the major clinical departments advanced notably. They will be remembered for their campaign to appoint full-time professors. In their busy and exacting life it was obvious that the best interests of the Medical School could only be served if the



Prof. Craib

heads of the divisions could devote more time to their academic and therapeutic challenges in the Hospital. Their achievements, their personalities and characters form a segment of the history of this Hospital, which falls outside the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that our Hospital and School still reverberate to an extent not easy to measure, with the contributions and effects of these three dynamic personalities.

#### Ronald Mackenzie Block

In 1939 the culmination of many years of planning was achieved with the erection of the large central Ronald Mackenzie Block, which brought the total beds in the complex to 1,666. As the building was occupied gradually, the Board resolved against holding an official opening ceremony. This imposing building rose high on the site of the Permanent Hospital of 1890. At the time, it was the last word in luxurious accommodation for inpatients, outpatients, casualty and administration. In the foyer may be seen the bust of Ernest Arthur Capelli, the donor of one wing. The new block was engraved in silent tribute to Ronald Mackenzie, doctor and public servant, who had played so significant a part in the story of the Johannesburg Hospital.

It is intriguing to dwell on a story with a human touch about the retirement of Dr. Mackenzie in 1928. The



Ronald Mackenzie Block (1962)

Hospital Board, as a token of its appreciation of his work, was anxious to make Dr. Mackenzie a gift of the motorcar he had used as superintendent. The Provincial authorities regretfully were unable to agree to this act, since the regulations could not allow it. The motorcar had to be



Prof. Brebner



Prof. Black

disposed of by public auction. Accordingly, the car came to auction, and the public, well aware by now of the circumstances of the situation, and indignant about it, did not participate in the bidding. There was only one bidder, Dr. Mackenzie, and he had the car knocked down to him for £10!

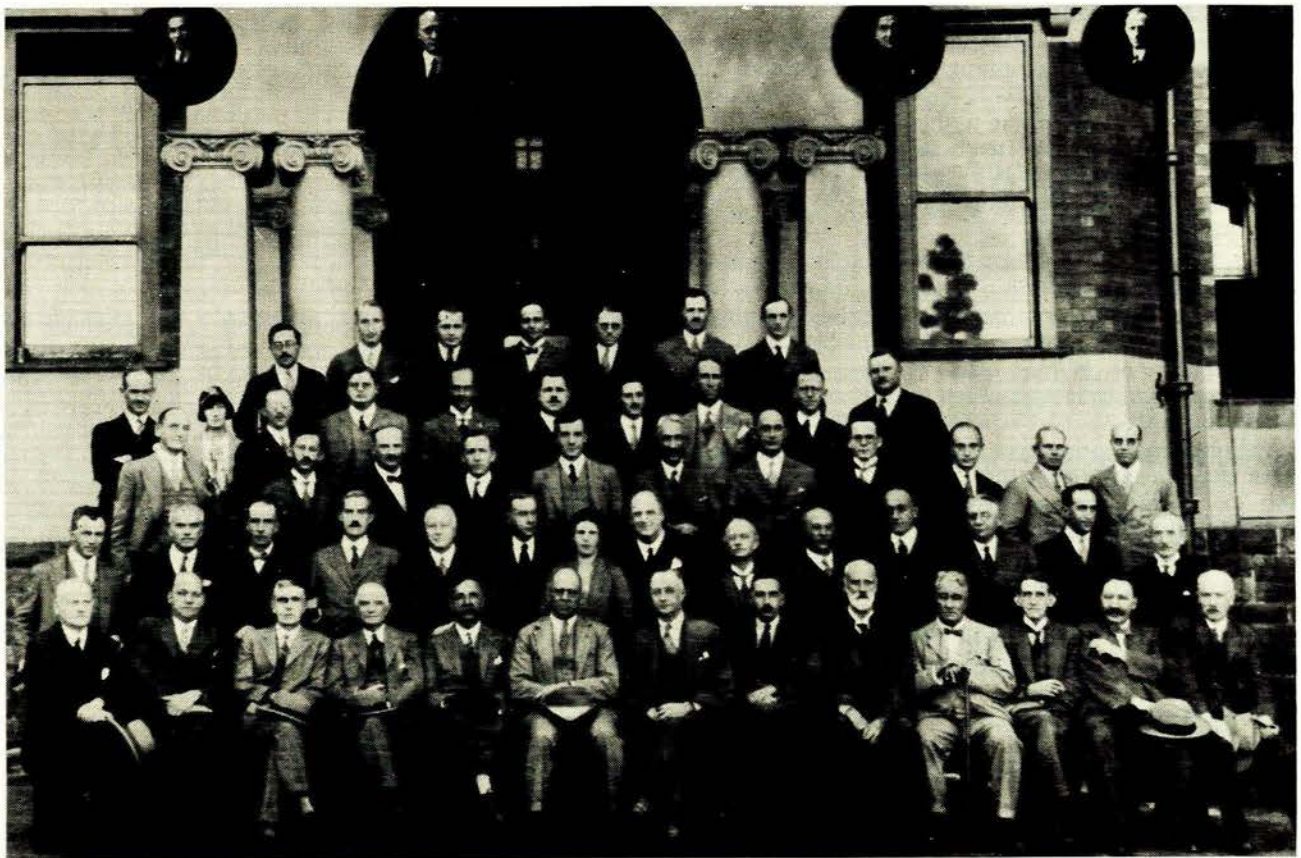
The picture below of a hospital staff group was taken at the time of Dr. Mackenzie's retirement in 1928. Dr. Mackenzie died in 1930, and a much-loved physician and administrator passed to rest in the presence of some 3,000 people who attended his funeral.

A tour of the Hospital and its branches today recalls the generosity of the public of the City over a period when maintenance and expansion was to an extent dependent on private enterprise. Many ward plaques bear silent testimony to those dedicated individuals and organizations who donated 'beds' to the Hospital. Theatres and buildings similarly stand in silent memory of others who helped the institution to meet its obligations to the sick and injured of Johannesburg and the Transvaal. The role of the City Council should also not be forgotten. The influence of members of Council and its Committees has been a significant factor in the steady growth and achievements of

this institution. Similarly, the Hospital's progress to a large extent has been dependent upon the support of the Transvaal Provincial Administration and the University of the Witwatersrand. Our story would be incomplete without placing on record the debt owed by the Johannesburg Hospital to the Provincial Council, the Hospital Services Department and the University.

The story of this Hospital's beginnings and development is a narrative of the contributions of many persons in many spheres. Doctors, nurses, administrators, engineers, architects, builders and others, assisted by public-spirited men and women, made progress possible. This 'outline' carries with it a regret that time and space did not permit us to do justice to all who have served the institution through the years.

Our thanks are gratefully recorded to: Miss A. Smith of the Africana Library of the City of Johannesburg for her assistance and for permission to copy the 'Gaal Hospital' photographed in her publication *The Pictorial History of Johannesburg*; Prof. D. J. du Plessis, Department of Surgery, for the photograph of Dr. J. van Niekerk; the photographic Unit of the Department of Medicine for their help with the illustrations; and Dr. Schoeman of the Transvaal Provincial Administration for the use of two photographic blocks.



Group of Medical Staff (1928)