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Doctors Hospital (New York, N.Y.) Board o Related Records, 1927-1994



Mount Sinai Archives Collections

Summary

Creator: Doctors Hospital (New York, N.Y.). Board of Directors
Title: Minutes and Related Records of the Doctors Hospital Board of Directors
Dates: 1927-1994
Volume: 3 boxes, 35 inches

This is a collection of historic material. The Aufses Archives does not manage medical records from Doctors Hospital. If you were born at Doctors Hospital and need to obtain a copy of your birth certificate, please contact the [New York City Department of Health](#).

Preface

The Mount Sinai Archives retrieved these records in September 2016 from an off-site storage account associated with the Beth Israel Medical Center, which acquired Doctors Hospital in 1987 and closed it in 2004. Beth Israel became part of the Mount Sinai Health System in 2013 as part of the merger between Mount Sinai and Continuum Health Partners.

Note that the proper name of the institution is “Doctors Hospital” without an apostrophe.

Historical Note

Doctors Hospital was a voluntary hospital on the Upper East Side of New York City which catered to affluent private patients. It was located at 170 East End Avenue between 87th and 88th Streets, overlooking Carl Schurz Park and Gracie Mansion.

The hospital was founded in the late 1920s by a group of socially prominent doctors and investors to meet the growing demand for private hospital rooms. Hospitals, by this time, had replaced the home as the primary site of medical treatment for patients of all social classes, but New York City’s hospitals had a limited supply of rooms for affluent patients who did not want to be housed on public wards.

The cornerstone of the hospital building was laid on April 30, 1929, and the hospital opened to patients on February 19, 1930. On its opening, the fourteen-story building contained 264 private rooms, with an additional 32 hotel-like rooms in which patients’ relatives could stay during treatment. It had no wards. Nicknamed the “hotel hospital” for its lavish interiors, its rooms were decorated in an early American style and included conveniences such as private iceboxes, which aimed at replicating the comforts of home for its wealthy patients. The founding medical staff of the hospital consisted of 182 doctors and surgeons.

The hospital was founded as a for-profit corporation and was expected to yield a return for its shareholders. In 1932, however, the shares of the hospital were turned over to a charitable foundation and the hospital was reorganized as a voluntary institution. Many believed this decision to have been motivated primarily by tax purposes. In 1941 the city brought a suit against the hospital for payment of back taxes, arguing that because it catered to private patients and did not offer charity care, it was not entitled to the hospital property tax exemption. The State Supreme Court ruled in favor of the city, but the ruling was overturned by the Appellate Division in 1944, which held that the exemption applied to all voluntary hospitals regardless of their patient demographics. Throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century the hospital continued to serve New York’s social elite as a place for medical treatment in a genteel private setting.

In 1987, Doctors Hospital was acquired by Beth Israel Medical Center. By 1992 it had been renamed Beth Israel Hospital North, and in 1998 it was renamed the Beth Israel Medical Center Singer Division in honor of Beth Israel donors Herbert and Nell Singer. Beth Israel closed the hospital in 2004. The following year the building was torn down and replaced by luxury residences.

From its founding until its acquisition by Beth Israel in 1987, Doctors Hospital was governed by a Board of Directors. Following the acquisition, this body was reorganized as a Board of Trustees, and in 1998 was renamed the Board of Trustees of Beth Israel Hospital North.

Sources: “The Doctors’ Hospital,” *New York Times*, May 4, 1929; “Doctors’ Hospital Keeps Cures Home,” *New York Times*, February 10, 1930; “Doctors Hospital Receives Patients,” *New York Times*, February 19, 1930; “Doctors Hospital Loses Suit on Tax,” *New York Times*, November 28, 1941; “Doctors Hospital Tax-Exemption Plan,” *New York Times*, May 13, 1944; “These Days, You Have to Be Ill to Get Into Doctors Hospital,” *New York Times*, December 27, 1970.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists primarily of the minutes of the Doctors Hospital Board of Directors and its successor bodies from 1932 to 1994. The minutes of the year 1987, during which the hospital was acquired by the Beth Israel Medical Center, are missing.

The minutes document the administrative and financial operations of an affluent voluntary hospital include: the approval of budgets; the receipt of gifts and donations; the management of real estate belonging to the hospital corporation; the progress and outcome of suits against the hospital; the of financial and committee reports; the recruitment, staffing and payment of nurses and residents; the granting of staff privileges to doctors. Notably, during much of the hospital's lifespan, the last of each year passed a motion approving the coming year's roster of physicians. This means that the minutes of a given year often include a complete roster of the following year's medical staff.

The 1958 minutes include a pasted-in copy of the complete hospital by-laws, which are a useful starting point for understanding the administrative and medical organization of the hospital.

The collection includes a small assortment of minutes and legal records dated 1927-1932 that relate to the 87th Street and East End Avenue Corporation. This was an entity, legally distinct from Doctors Hospital, which managed the real estate aspects of the project during the initial establishment of the hospital. It was absorbed by the main Doctors Hospital corporation in 1932, likely as part of its restructuring as a nonprofit voluntary hospital. The collection also includes a small assortment of records (1983-1989) and minutes (1987-1991) related to the Doctors Hospital Foundation, a legal entity distinct from the hospital set up during the process of integrating Doctors Hospital with the Beth Israel Medical Center.

Finally, there is a small folder of historical notes, dated 1969, which were found tipped into the first volume of minutes. These notes include biographical details on some of the founders of the hospital.

Related Materials

The vertical subject file of the Mount Sinai Archives contains news clippings related to the history of Doctors Hospital.

Subjects

- 87th Street and East End Avenue Corporation
- Doctors Hospital (New York, N.Y.). Board of Trustees
- Beth Israel Medical Center (New York, N.Y.). Beth Israel Hospital North. Board of Directors
- Hospitals - Administration [LCSH]
- Hospitals, Voluntary [MeSH]

Container List

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Box	Contents
1	Doctors Hospital – Board of Directors Minutes, 1932-1944
	87 th Street and East End Avenue Corporation – Board of Directors Minutes and Legal Records, 1927-1932
2	Doctors Hospital – Board of Directors Minutes, 1945-1981

Box	Contents
3	Doctors Hospital – Board of Directors/Trustees Minutes, 1982-1991
	Beth Israel Hospital North – Board of Trustees Minutes, 1992-1994
	Doctors Hospital Foundation – Minutes, 1987-1991; Legal Documents 1989
	Historical Notes, 1969


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Doctors Hospital (Manhattan)

Doctors Hospital was a hospital located at 170 East End Avenue, between 87th and 88th Streets opposite Gracie Mansion in the Yorkville neighborhood of Manhattan. It served as the primary maternity hospital for uptown Manhattan births (Manhattan General served as such for downtown Manhattan). It was also known as a "fashionable treatment center for the well-to-do".^[1]

History

The 14 floor Hospital was founded in 1929 as Doctor's Hospital. Patients included Huguette Clark, Michael Jackson, Marilyn Monroe, Robert Mueller, Jacqueline Susann, James Thurber, Clare Boothe Luce, Oveta Culp Hobby and Eugene O'Neill.^[1]

Additional names treated or those that died at Doctors Hospital were Theodore Hardeen, AKA Hardeen, Houdini's brother and magician in his own right, who died at the age of 69 after a routine surgery in 1945.^[2] Ann Woodward, wife of 'Billy' William Woodward, Jr., was promptly rushed to Doctors Hospital in 1955 after mistakenly shooting her husband. Billy was part of the 2nd and 3rd generation of the top 400 wealthiest of families in America. The infamous shooting, occurring in October, is commonly known as, "The Shooting of the Century". Ann Woodward's short, several day stay started nearly immediately that night after the shooting, stopping legal authorities from questioning her about the fateful night. By residing in a private room at Doctor's Hospital for treatment for her nervous upset, she successfully stopped legal authorities from questioning her about the shooting so that the families' lawyers could work with the police to find a more tasteful way of handling the situation involving the wealthy murderer and the Woodward name's delicate reputation.^[3]

It was acquired by Beth Israel Medical Center in 1987.

In 2001, the medical facility had about 210 beds and more than 800 employees. The hospital was closed in August 2004 and sold along with two nearby apartment buildings for \$166.5 million. The building was razed in 2005 and replaced with a new 19 story, 110 unit residential condominium building.^{[4][5]}

References

- ↑ **Bill Dedman**, Paul Clark Newell, Jr, *Empty Mansions: The Mysterious Life of Huguette Clark and the Loss of one of the World's Greatest Fortunes* London: Atlantic Books, 2013, p. 228
- ↑ "Hardeen Dead, 69. Houdini's Brother Illusionist, Escape Artist, a Founder of Magician's Guild. Gave Last Show May 29.". New York Times. June 13, 1945. "Theodore Hardeen, a brother of the late Harry Houdini, illusionist and a prominent magician in his own right, died yesterday in the Doctors Hospital. His age was 69."
- ↑ Susan Braudy, "This Crazy Thing Called Love The Golden World and Fatal Marriage of Ann and Billy Woodward", New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992
- ↑ *170 East End Avenue* (http://www.thecityreview.com/ues/eeave/eea170.html) The City Review, retrieved 24 August 2010
- ↑ Siwolop, Sana (30 March 2005), "COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE: REGIONAL MARKET -- Manhattan; For Nonprofits, Owning Is Becoming the Wave of the Past", *The New York Times*, New York

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By RONALD SULLIVAN NOV. 4, 1984



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HOSPITAL FOR RICH NOW AIDS EAST SIDE

Doctors, Which Once Catered
to the Famous, Increase
Services for Yuhville

By ROBERT DILLON

Doctors, which once catered to the famous, are now turning their backs on the East Side. The hospital, which was founded in 1900, is now a part of the city's health system.

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The Daily Rounds

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The Clinic in Ambulance

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Personal Therapy

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VIEW PAGE IN TIMSMACHINE

Doctors Hospital, once the medical preserve of the rich and famous on the Upper East Side, is becoming a highly visible community hospital serving Yorkville's large elderly population and its growing influx of young professionals.

Toward that end, the 54-year-old hospital, at 170 East End Avenue, at 86th Street, is undergoing a \$40 million renovation that is expected to be completed by the end of next year.

Gone are the private rooms overlooking Gracie Mansion, Carl Schurz Park and the East River that were occupied over the years by such patients as James Thurber, Oscar Hammerstein 2d, Claire Boothe Luce, Eugene O'Neill, Eddie Cantor and Marilyn Monroe.

While the views are the same, most of the rooms are now semiprivate and relatively celebrity-free. Gone, too, are the hospital worker whose only job was to polish silver and the food-service sommelier whose major preoccupation was selecting the right wine for a patient's dinner.

No Daily Rounds

Moreover, patients no longer are hospitalized at Doctors because they need a rest, as Robert Moses was in 1948. As in every other hospital in the city, patients must be seriously ill to be admitted, or else private and public health insurers such as Blue Cross or Medicare will not pay for their care.

There are no daily rounds at Doctors, because it is the only private, nonprofit hospital in Manhattan that does not have a physician teaching program, or any interns or residents. This means that patients are treated by their private attending physicians and surgeons, or by staff physicians who have completed their residency training.

According to John C. Donaher Jr., hospital's earlier reputation as an elite medical enclave that did not practice "serious medicine" no longer holds true. Instead, he said, the 263-bed, 14-floor hospital is seeking to become an integral part of the Upper East Side community, reaching out both to the very old and a growing younger population that he characterized as "Yuppies."

The one constant is that Doctors still does not care for many poor patients. No Clinics or Ambulances

According to the New York City Health Systems Agency, fewer than 1 percent of the hospital's admissions in 1982 were covered by Medicaid, the state public health insurance program for the poor. Nearly 60 percent of admissions were elderly patients covered by the Federal Medicare program, while the remaining 40 percent were private patients covered either by Blue Cross or some other form of private hospitalization insurance.

Mr. Donaher attributed the absence of poor patients partly to the hospital's being situated in a highly affluent, out- of-the way section of the Upper East Side. Also, Doctors does not have clinics or ambulances, both of which normally account for the admission of many poor patients in other hospitals.

Doctors is a small hospital that concentrates on basic medical and surgical cases that do not require the high degree of sophisticated or techical expertise available at large teaching hospitals that feature specialty services, such as New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center or Mount Sinai Medical Center. While Doctors handles such surgical cases as gall-bladder removal and hernia repair, it does not perform open-heart surgery.

According to Mr. Donaher, most of the physicians at Doctors are on medical-school faculties and have admitting privileges at major teaching hospitals, where they send their patients who require more complicated care. 'Personal Charge'

"It is an interesting phenonema," Mr. Donaher said in an interview last week. "They like admitting their less- complicated cases here because it allows them to take personal charge of their patients, which sometimes is not possible when your patient becomes part of a big teaching program at a medical center."

Because Doctors does not have costly teaching programs, he said, the hospital can provide care for less money. This means a savings to the public because virtually all hospitalization costs are eventually borne by the public in the form of Federal Medicare costs or Blue Cross insurance premiums.

For example, the daily rate that Blue Cross pays for hospitalization at Doctors is \$381. At New York Hospital and Mount Sinai, the daily rates are \$558 and \$541 respectively.

The renovation of Doctors includes plans for a new emergency room staffed by full-time physicians trained in emergency medicine, a radiology facility that includes nuclear medicine and ultrasound services, and an outpatient surgical center.

However, there is some doubt whether the hospital will become part of the city's 911 emergency ambulance system, given the proximity of major emergency rooms at other nearby hospitals.

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