

# Historically Speaking

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## More Medical Milestones

By Julie Spilinek

The previous issue of this publication featured many of the dedicated physicians that practiced medicine in Howard County during the past 100 plus years. This issue will feature the beginning and subsequent growth of the present Howard County Medical Center. As mentioned in the previous issue, the first hospital was in a house. That house is once again a residence. During the 1800's and early 1900's a doctor had his office in his home. If surgery was necessary, it was performed there. Sometimes a surgery was performed at the home of a patient. The doctor carried all necessary instruments and medicines in his



black bag. Babies were almost always delivered at the home of the mother. If the couple lived in a one room home the father remained with the wife. When houses became larger and more complex, he was usually asked to wait in a different part of the home. Later, some communities had a mid-wife that helped deliver the little bundles of

joy. This was especially true during the years that new mothers were expected to remain bed-fast for 10-12 days. If the woman remained at home, she often had a young girl hired to help. Childbirth has really really undergone changes from those home deliveries to those in today's ultra modern



buildings with ultra modern technology. Similar to many of its big city facilities, the Howard County Hospital has separate birthing suites where the father and/or other family members can be present. When the birth of babies began to occur in hospitals, the father and other family members were asked to remain in a waiting room until the doctor came in to announce that it

*Dr. E. C. Hanisch, left, and Dr. M. O. Arnold, right, were credited with the idea of St. Paul having a hospital.—Dr. Hanisch's photo is courtesy of Betty Czamek and Dr. Arnold's photo is from the Howard County Medical Center's website.*

was a boy or girl. The mother was placed in a labor room prior to going to a delivery room. The baby was taken to a nursery.

Until the 1950's, women did not seek medical care until midterm or later. Parents did not announce a baby's impending birth until it was obvious. Occasionally a woman had a baby with-

## Looking Back at 2014

*Julie Spilinek,  
Board of Directors Secretary*

*I usually write about events and situations that occurred many years ago. This article will summarize the events that occurred during the past 12 months—December 2013 through November 2014. Several repair and maintenance items were undertaken from fixing a deteriorating corner on the depot to giving it a whole new paint job. Gutters on the Gruber House were fixed and a new door put on the church.*

*The community Christmas celebration, spearheaded by Alice Osterman and held at the Village, was a huge success. The bake sale that was held earlier in the day was also successful. GCA Days in July also drew a good crowd as many toured the buildings. The pie social brought in a good amount. The Sunday worship service held under the 'big tent' was also well attended.*

*Throughout the summer there were weekend visitors during the regular open hours plus several special tour groups by appointment.*

*Looking ahead, the board of directors has been studying plans for another exhibit building, plus providing an area to accommodate meetings and possible programs. This is due to generous gifts from the estates of Julia Schubert of St. Paul and Richard Nielsen of Dannebrog.*

*An enormous thank you goes out to the many volunteers that keep the Historical Village an integral part of St. Paul. This includes the hosts that are present when the buildings are open, tour guides for special groups, chairpersons for the various fund raisers, those who water the flowers and pull the weeds, and keep it all cleaned up and those who bake all the items for the fund raisers.*



*The grand opening of the new 20-bed Howard County Memorial Hospital was in October of 1955. Above is the delivery room. —All the hospital photographs are courtesy of Carol Rasmussen.*



*A up-to-date kitchen was part of the new hospital.*

out anyone's knowledge; she simply wore larger clothes. By 1960, special maternity wear was fashionable. Except for pants and skirts, today's mother-to-be again choose larger shirts. Maternity wear is almost non-existent.

With the use of that ultra modern technology, a woman can learn if she's pregnant within a couple of weeks of conception. Ultrasound and sonograms are routinely used to check on the progress of the fetus and even determine the sex of the baby. If a problem is detected it can be monitored. Surgery to correct a problem to the unborn child is also possible.

The idea for a hospital in St. Paul was devel-



*Residents of Howard County lined up to see their new hospital at the grand opening in 1955. The price tag for the hospital was \$195,541, coming in under the \$250,000 estimate.*

oped by Dr. E. C. Hanisch, Sr., and Dr. M. O. Arnold when they purchased the house mentioned earlier from Mrs. Mary L. Bell and had it remodeled in 1943. In 1944 the two deeded the property to a board of trustees: Edward Polansky of St. Paul, Edward Waltman of Dannevirke and George Christensen of Dannebrog. In 1949 it became known as the Howard County Memorial Hospital, Inc.

By 1955 it was apparent that a larger facility was needed so a 20 bed hospital was built and opened its doors in October of that year. Some of the staff that helped maintain it were Doris Starkey as RN superintendent, Clara Piechota, Mrs. John Vannes, Helen Safarik and Stacia Matousek as general duty employees. Mrs. Rinehart Kunze and Mrs. Dallas Rohman were part-time general duty. Mrs. Cord Wilkins supervised the kitchen while Mrs. Anna Schmidt was in charge of the laundry. Mrs. Minnie Dissmeyer

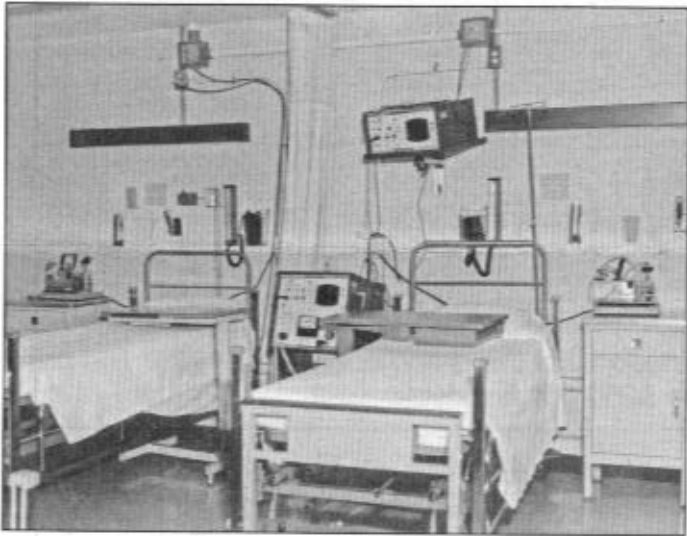
was responsible for cleaning. James Laughrey was hired as a part-time maintenance person.

Since that time numerous changes have occurred. In 1970 17 beds were added and areas of the hospital were remodeled. In 1981 a north wing was added providing space for a conference room, medical records and office space. In 1984 the laundry area was updated. With the ever emerging use of computers, the first computer system was installed in 1992. The next major move was in 1997 with the purchase of the medical clinic built by Dr. M. D. Mathews which resulted in several remodeling projects that allowed the clinic to be moved into the hospital. In 2008 another major renovation occurred which gave the entrance a new look. Separate admissions offices were added plus an addition to the clinic area. Just this year the ER area and laboratory were remodeled.

Russell Swigart, who still lives in St. Paul, was

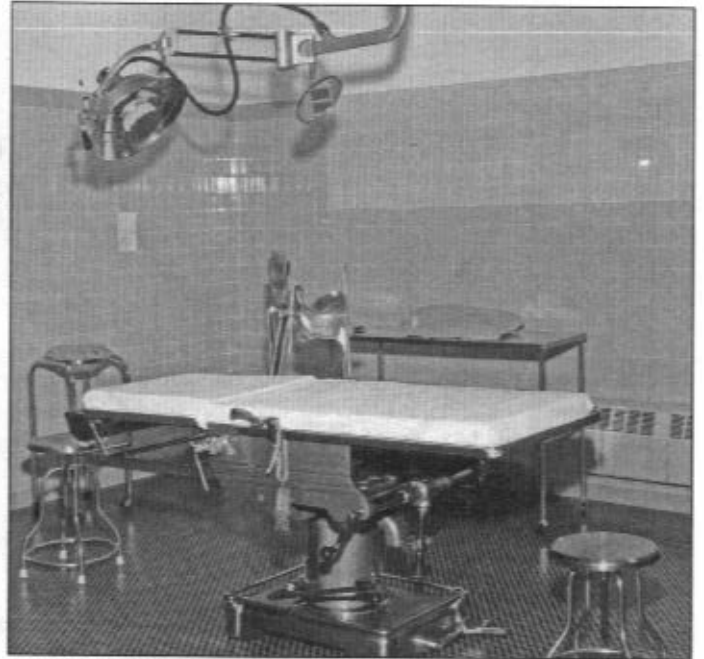


*Patients records were recorded on charts.*



*There were two beds in the patient rooms.*

the hospital administrator during many of the improvements mentioned as he held that position from 1983 to May of 2001 when he retired. Interim Ron Waltz served for a brief time, followed by Arthur Frable who served from 2001 to 2008. He was followed by Interim Gary Berganski and a short term by Tim Wilck. Since 2010 Arlan Johnson has been the administrator. Prior to Russ Swigart, Kenneth Simpson held the position. When I visited with Mr. Swigart, he mentioned that prior to his term there were no television sets in the patient rooms and no computers. He was instrumental in creating the swing bed program and establishing the Hospital Foundation which continues to provide funds for new equipment in order to provide better care.



*The surgery room was equipped with the latest equipment of the day.*



*Those attending the October grand opening signed the guest book which was located at the main entrance.*

The hospital auxiliary, which has been in existence since the beginning, also helps raise money for items. The members also manage a thrift store that helps the community as well as the hospital.

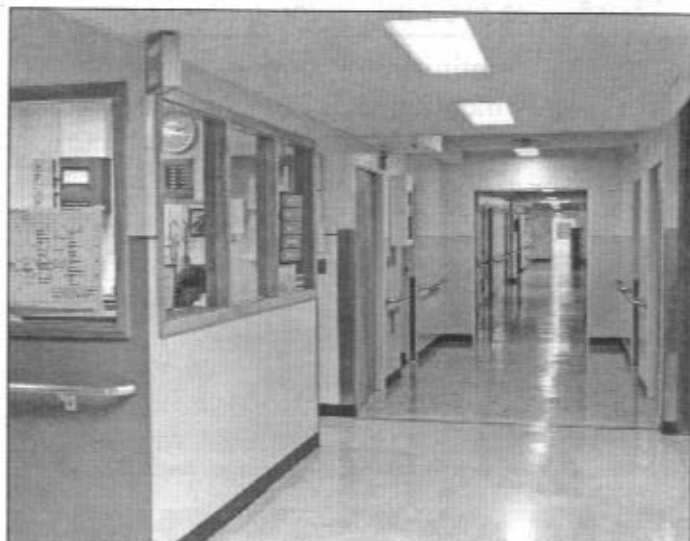
Although we still hear people praise the early country doctors who made house calls, the new medical advances that are available do make life better for most of us. Howard County has a facility and the personnel that can provide numerous services to its citizens and surrounding area. I want to thank Jean Kehm who provided some of the above information.



*The nursery was a popular stop on the tours held during the grand opening.*



*The hospital included a modern lab.*



*The corridor outside the nurse's station leads to the patient rooms.*

The hospital is seeking old pictures and information on the hospital, which will be part of a wall display at the new hospital. Anyone who has photographs or information is asked to contact Jean Kehm at the hospital.

## Medical Practices from the Past

Some of you may remember when a mustard plaster was the cure for what some called the gripp--now considered the flu. Stuffy noses were treated with the steam from heated Vicks Vaporub And, of course, chicken soup was, and still is, recommended for many minor ills. My grandmother was a believer in baking soda for indigestion, and a little wine to help a baby sleep. My brother and I were treated to a tablespoon of whiskey for something. It tasted awful.

Following are a few suggestions from a book entitled *More Chicken Soup and Other Folk*

Advertising from 1928:

## Get a New Lease of life



Every housewife will welcome this new economical, healthful food

# PROTOSF

**T**HE greatest contribution to abounding vitality and health is inner cleanliness. Next is a full quota of vitamins, food iron and lime.

One of the most interesting discoveries in modern times is a vegetable meat. Protose by name. Not only does it look like meat, taste like meat and have the aroma, composition and fibre of meat, but Protose can be served in any way meat is served. Hot or cold. Roasted, broiled, stewed or sliced as it comes from the can. Try it in salads and sandwiches!

Protose abounds in healthful protein. With six times as much food iron as beef steak, it is wonderful for growing children. Its essential vitamins tone up the system.

Every housewife will welcome this new economical, healthful food. It simplifies cooking. There is no waste. It is all food. Order a can today from your local Health Food Center. It carries the complete line of Battle Creek Sanitarium Health Foods, used with such success at the Battle Creek Sanitarium and similiar institutions.

Write today for a copy of "Healthful Living" which describes with recipes the delicious, beneficial foods used in the Battle Creek Diet System. Sent free upon request.

THE BATTLE CREEK FOOD CO., Battle Creek, Mich.

*Remedies* by Joan and Lydia Wilen.

If you burn yourself and have raw chicken at hand, place the chicken fat directly on the burn to soothe it. Ease the pain of a burned tongue by putting a bit of sugar on it. (I have tried this and found it works.)

An acupressure joint that has been known to stop a cough is the one near the end of the middle finger. With the fingers of your right hand, squeeze the top joint of the left hand's middle finger. Keep squeezing until you stop wheezing.

A West Indies remedy for diarrhea is a pinch of allspice in a cup of warm water or milk. A Pennsylvania Dutch remedy is 2 pinches of cinnamon in a cup of warm milk. A Brazilian remedy calls for 2 pinches of cinnamon and 1 pinch of powdered cloves in a cup of warm milk.

For an earache, cut a large onion in half and take out the inside of the onion so that the remain-

ing part will fit over your ear. Warm the onion "earmuff" in the oven, then put it over your ear. It should help draw out the pain.

Some sty sufferers have had success by applying castor oil to the area.

A popular European colic calmer is fennel

*Advertising from 1917:*

## "Sore Throat"

*is a thing full of terror—*

But sore throat can easily be guarded against by the exercise of a little intelligent care. Keep the mouth and throat clean and healthy by the use, morning and evening, of

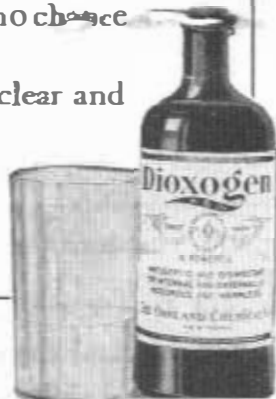
## Dioxogen

*(a teaspoonful to a quarter glass of water)*

and the germs which cause sore throat, colds, and La Grippe have no chance to develop.

Dioxogen keeps the throat clear and free from irritation and huskiness.

THE OAKLAND CHEMICAL CO.  
10 Astor Place, N. Y.



tea... If she/he is not thrilled with the taste of fennel, try dill seeds. Caraway seeds are also said to bring relief to colicky kids.

*Advertising from 1924:*

## Deaf Can Hear Says Science

### New Invention Aids Thousands

Here's good news for all who suffer from deafness. The Dictograph Products Corporation announces the perfection of a remarkable device which has enabled thousands of deaf persons to hear as well as ever. The makers of this wonderful device say it is too much to expect you to believe this, so they are going to give you a chance to try it at home. They offer to send it by prepaid parcel post on a ten-day free trial. They do not send it C. O. D.—they require no deposit—there is no obligation. They send it entirely at their own expense and risk. They are making this extraordinary offer, well knowing that the magic of this little instrument will so amaze and delight the user that the chances of its being returned are very slight. Thousands have already accepted this offer and report most gratifying results. There's no longer any need that you should endure the mental and physical strain which comes from a constant effort to hear. Now you can mingle with your friends without that feeling of sensitiveness from which all deaf persons suffer. Now you can take your place in the social and business world to which your talents entitle you and from which your affliction has, in a measure, excluded you. Just send your name and address to the Dictograph Products Corporation, 1311 Candler Bldg., 230 W. 42nd St., New York, for descriptive literature and request blank.

## ***Dues Are Due for 2015***

**Check your address label, those with a 15 have paid their dues. Thanks.**

**Dues are \$10.00 a year.**

**Send to Howard County Historical Society,  
P.O. Box 1, St. Paul, NE 68873.**



HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 P.O. Box 1  
 SAINT PAUL, NEBRASKA 68873



*Historically speaking*



**INSIDE:** "More Medical Milestones" includes information on the construction of Howard County Memorial Hospital, which opened in 1955. The feature was written by Julie Spilinek.

**Historically Speaking**

Saint Libby, Saint Paul, and Warsaw

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