



***HISTORY OF LAMAR SCHOOL OF NURSING***

***FROM THE "PEST HOUSE" LAMAR HOSPITAL TO UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL***

In the late 1800s, Dr. William Doughty, Jr., an instructor at the Medical College of Georgia and a private practitioner, learned that local financier, Gazaway B. Lamar, who died in 1874, left funds "for building of two hospitals for the exclusive care of negro patients" in Georgia. Savannah had acquired half the bequest to build a hospital for blacks in that city, but Augusta's share remained untouched. Dr. Doughty asked the City Council of Augusta for funds to match the gift in order to build a replacement facility for the old Freedmen's Hospital which was built by the Freedmen's Bureau, on Gwinnett Street, present location the Farmer's Market, for the care of many blacks who migrated to Augusta following the Civil War. Its nickname was "The Pest House". After the military left, Freedmen's Hospital continued under administration by the city and MCG faculty. The Board of Health assumed responsibility of the Freedmen's Hospital upon construction of the Lamar Hospital in 1895. Caring for individuals with "afflictions of a contagious or infectious nature," the hospital became the Hospital for Contagious and Infectious Diseases. During the smallpox mini-epidemic of 1926, the hospital again served as a "Pest House".

The City Council appropriated \$8,000 for the project. In 1895 a 75-bed Lamar Hospital, a continuation of Freedmen's Hospital, was constructed on Gwinnett Street, now Laney Walker Boulevard, at the present site of Tabernacle Baptist Church.

Gazaway Lamar, a white philanthropist, supported the hospital, hence the name Lamar Hospital. Lamar Hospital became a victim of neglect because it depended on aid from public officials. In 1911 buildings and medical operations were inadequate. On January 10, 1911 the deteriorating structure collapsed when a defective wire in the ceiling of the third floor caused a fire destroying the building. The Haines Institute temporarily housed the patients until the reopening of the Contagious and Infectious Disease Hospital and the Lamar Wing of University Hospital was built. All records were destroyed with it. The nursing school was then moved to temporary quarters at Haines Institute operated by Miss Lucy C. Laney where it remained for several years.

In 1890 when perpetual epidemics raged through Augusta, exercising vision, Miss Laney made the school available to every opportunity to serve the community. She was responsible for the first trained nurses in the city of Augusta. She urged the establishment of such work. The city was asked to donate a building. Ten girls were sent from Haines Institute in 1893 to form a nurse training class. This marked the first kind of nurse training for Negro girls in the city of Augusta and the South, the predecessor of the Lamar School of Nursing of the University Hospital. The first class in nurse training graduated in 1896.

Records denote that the early nurse training program was a two year program consisted of on the job training. No record is found of these graduates. Dr. Doughty was interested in hospital care for the Negro patients and was influential in the early days of nursing. A statement in the minutes of the Medical College of Georgia faculty in 1899 mentioned the Lamar Hospital and Training School.

Miss Virginia Bowden, a white graduate nurse from Canada, was the first teacher. Miss Laney persuaded her to come and take charge of the training. A joint venture between blacks and whites established and erected a hospital in 1895. Mrs. Bowden was the Superintendent of Nursing and Principal of the Training School from the approximate time of establishment until 1900. A graduate of the school, Mary Cauley followed Miss Bowden

Miss Mary Cauley, a former student of Haines, was the nurse of Mrs. Wheeler. Mrs. Wheeler in 1924, because of the wonderful impression made upon her by Miss Cauley, a bequest \$10,000 for fostering primary education. According to a line in one document, while Mrs. Wheeler's family wished to remain anonymous for the most part, the school honored her in name. A building was erected, known as the Cauley-Wheeler Building in Augusta, GA.

The Cauley-Wheeler Memorial Building is the only remnant of the early campus and is under the control of the Haines Alumni Association Incorporated.

Miss Lucy C. Laney together with Miss Amelia Sullivan started the three year training program for nurses in 1906. Miss Mittie White, a former graduate of the school, was secured by Miss Laney to teach student nurses. Miss White was fortunate in having been sent by a wealthy philanthropist to Denmark for post graduate study in Canada.

In 1909 Ludie Andrews sued the Georgia State Board of Nurse Examiners to secure black nurses the right to take the state board examination and became licensed, she won in 1920.

In 1913 the nursing school was moved to former quarters, Freedmen's Hospital, "The Pest House". In 1925, the Lamar School of Nursing was moved to University Hospital on the newly opened Lamar Wing. The patients from the Pest House were transferred to the new quarters at University Hospital, Lamar Wing. The Lamar Wing of University Hospital was built from the money obtained from the sale of the land to Tabernacle Baptist Church.

Lamar Nursing students lived on the fourth floor of the Lamar Wing until Stoney Nurses Home was built in 1939. All classes were taught at University Hospital. The students lived on the fourth floor under crowded conditions, as many as 17 students occupied a single room. The dormitory to house black nursing students was completed in 1940 on Railroad Avenue, now R.A. Dent Boulevard. (White students were housed in the Doughty Nurses Home). The dormitory was named Stoney Nurses Home in honor of a prominent local black physician, Dr. George Stoney. The dormitory is located on the Medical College of Georgia campus and house Medical College of Georgia School of Nursing. There is a monument erected at original site of the Stoney Nurses Residence, now located at the Medical College of Georgia, renamed GRU.

In 1943 the Lamar School of Nursing participated in the accelerated program under the auspices of the U.S. Cadet corps. The students were enrolled and housed at Paine College for a nine month period during which they received instructions in the basic sciences. Since that time University Hospital continued this affiliation with Paine College until 1956 and remained closed until 1960.

The students continued in segregated nursing school classes, blacks enrolled through the Lamar School of Nursing and whites enrolled through the Barrett School of Nursing. Miss Alice Stewart, the nursing director, gradually and without notice, brought black and white nursing students together in the same classroom.

The schools of nursing remained separate until 1965 when they were merged to form the University Hospital School of Nursing. The students, black and white, shared the Doughty dormitory as the Lamar School of Nursing ceased to exist.

From the beginning of the first graduating class in 1909, two year program and later three year program, until 1956 there were 495 nurses graduating from the Lamar School of Nursing. Upon reopening of the Nursing School in 1960 there were 38 with 13 of the students graduated as University Hospital School of Nursing. There were no records for the classes of 1912 and 1948.

There were many black nurses who pursued further nursing degrees after graduating from the Lamar School of Nursing and University Hospital School of Nursing.

Lamar nurses worked in all areas of nursing i.e. public health, school nurse, military nurse, medical and surgical nursing, nurse practitioner, doctor's office, nursing instructors, nurse anesthetists, PhD in Psychology, PhD in Nursing, nurse administration and many other specialties.

Dr. Margaret T. Beard, Class of '46, taught nursing at Texas Woman University, Dallas, Texas. On the campus of Texas Woman University a health science building was built and the third floor of the building was named in honor of Dr. Margaret T. Beard. Dr. Beard authored a book, Theory Construction and Testing and an ongoing journal from 1995 to present, Journal of Theory Construction and Testing.

The rich legacy of the Lamar School of Nursing continues to live on in 200 plus graduates across the United States.

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This history is submitted by the members of the Lamar School of Nursing Alumnae Association.

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