

## PETERSBURG HOSPITAL HISTORY

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In 1997 the Petersburg Medical Center has an annual budget of \$4.2 million and 54 full time employees including two Doctors and a Physicians Assistant. The facility is valued at over 12 million dollars and occupies the entirety of Block 5. There have been a lot of changes since the Smith home (on Block 5) became the Petersburg Hospital in 1917.

### HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION ORGANIZED, PURCHASES PROPERTY

Tuesday, February 3, 1917 was a special day as a meeting of the hospital association was held in the Sons of Norway Hall for the purpose of heading a fund raising drive for a hospital building for Petersburg. Mrs. T.K. Thorvilson, wife of the local Lutheran minister and President of the hospital association called the meeting. During the meeting it was decided to organize a stock company with capital stock of at least \$2,000 and sell shares for \$1.00 each. Four hundred shares were subscribed at the meeting, but insufficient funds were raised in this manner. On May 23, 1917 the Directors mortgaged the hospital property (Smith home) to Erick Ness for a loan of \$1,500.00

Charles Smith, a prospector, had a three story wooden home with a balcony that had been built by Louis Miller for him. It was located on Lots 6-7-8 of Block 5. He sold the house and property to the Hospital Association for \$3,500.00 in the spring of 1917. This house served as the hospital until a new one was built in 1955. A portion of the current hospital is located on this property. The Hospital Association leased the building to a Dr. Bulkley for \$50.00 a month. Within days the doctor moved in and the Petersburg newspaper headlined "Petersburg Now Has Hospital".

### DOCTORS 19 11 - 1928

Prior and subsequent to the start of the hospital, Doctors practicing in Petersburg were: L. Pryer 1911- '17; William P. Balance, 1915, and J. Lyman Buckley, 1917- '18; W.J. Pigg, 1917- '21; K. A. Kyvig, 1918; J.L. Clark, 1918; A.S. Brown, 1918; C.H. Uptom

1919; Gladys Rowley, 1920; Herbert C. Carothers, 1920 - '22; A.B. Jones, 1921 - '28. Robert N. Rogers, 1922; Dan Standard, 1926; and Thomas B. Rhone, 1928.

#### TOWN PURCHASES HOSPITAL

On December 5, 1921 the Town Council minutes read: " Messrs. Wheeler & Tveten appeared on behalf of the Hospital Association relative to the matter of turning the hospital over to the Town. Mr. Wheeler reported that the majority of Stockholders have already declared themselves in favor of turning their stock over to the Town and that the rest of them are signing such agreement as readily as they are approached upon the subject. Mr. Tveten informed the Council that the Hospital owes approximately \$4,500.00 at this time and that accounts receivable amount to about \$800.00 of which \$600.00 are good accounts."

The Town Council meeting of December 19, 1921 brought forth a resolution and agreement to purchase the Hospital for \$1.00 and the Town to pay indebtedness of \$5,147.55 The deed to the Hospital property was executed May 1, 1922 and the Town of Petersburg was in the hospital business. Even though records indicate that the going was rough over the next few years, the Town of Petersburg has remained in the hospital business to this day. The building purchased by the town in 1922 remained the Petersburg Hospital building until 1955 at which time a new building was dedicated.

#### OTHER HOSPITALS IN TOWN

The May 25, 1923 issue of the Petersburg Weekly Report stated that: A new building is being built for the U.S. Cable Office. It will be located next to the Brennan Building on Front and G Street. (where the Post Office is in 1997). The ground floor will be occupied by the cable office, and the upper floor will be office space for professional men. The August 3rd issue of the Petersburg Weekly Report says that Dr. A.B. Jones will move into the upper story of the new Cable Office. Dr. Jones stated that an emergency hospital will be maintained by the Bureau of Public Health, with a competent nurse in charge. It will also be available for private cases. On September 27th it was reported that a nine and a half pound boy, William (Bill) Stedman arrived at the Public Health Hospital on Thursday evening to gladden the hearts of Mr. and

Mrs. William Stedman. Both mother and son are doing nicely under the care of Dr. A.B. Jones. This is the first child in the Stedman family and also the first child born in the new hospital which was opened on Wednesday.

An Advertisement in the February 1st, 1924 Petersburg Weekly Report is of interest:

#### EMERGENCY RELIEF HOSPITAL

Surgical, Medical, Obstetrical cases, Teeth extracted

Graduate Nurse

Rates \$5.00 per day

L. C. Bezanson, Superintendent

There was apparently more than one Hospital in Petersburg at this time.

#### HOSPITAL RE- ESTABLISHED

The hospital apparently fell on hard times as on May 6, 1929 Rev. W. J. Maakestad, Pastor of the Petersburg Lutheran Church appeared before the Council requesting to establish a General Hospital in Petersburg. He submitted a proposal from Rev. Kildal of the Board of Charities Department of the Lutheran Church. The estimated cost of reconditioning the hospital was \$1,500.00 and this was authorized by the Town Council on June 3, 1929. This was done in anticipation of Lutheran Missionary Dr. Joseph O. Rude coming to Petersburg to practice. The home Mission Board of the Norwegian Lutheran Church furnished two nurses free of charge for three years. The July 19, 1929 issue of Petersburg newspaper said that: New hospital to be opened here in a week, two nurses which the Lutheran Board of Hospital and Missions is supplying are expected to arrive next week to supervise re-opening of the establishment. It is apparent that the exact date of the beginning of the Petersburg Hospital (as we know it today) is open to some debate.

Miss Mina Olson, was one of these missionary nurses, her stay extended to 30 years. Miss Olson was hospital superintendent and X-ray technician for many years. Prior to World War II only single nurses were hired by the hospital. When a nurse was married she was required to give up her job. Quite a few woman came to Petersburg through this process. I'm sure it was thought highly of by the single men of

Petersburg.

#### HOSPITAL BOARD APPOINTED

In August, 1929 Mayor Earl N. Ohmer appointed a Hospital Board composed of the Rev. Maakestad, chairman, and members, C.E. Swanson, Charles Greena, Jacob Otness and Fred Nelson. This board later was dissolved in favor of the City Council taking over responsibility of operating the hospital, which was the policy until 1954.

#### DOCTORS 1929 - 1960

Dr. Joseph O. Rude practiced in Petersburg from 1929 until 1941. He then moved to Juneau where he continued to practice for many years. Dr. Theodore W. Benson came to Petersburg in 1929 and worked until his death in 1947. During the illness of Dr. T.W. Benson in 1947, Dr. Al Ellison was here for a few months to take care of Dr. Benson's practice. Dr. R. Harrison Leer arrived in 1947 to take over the practice of Dr. Benson. Dr. Harrison Leer stayed only about a year before returning to school to become an ophthalmologist. Dr. Jesse L. Herrill Jr. and his wife, Dr. Esther Herrill, shared a practice in Petersburg from 1949 - '51. Dr. Russell C. Smith arrived in 1951 and practiced in Petersburg until his death in 1968.

#### PETERSBURG HOSPITAL GUILD

The Petersburg Hospital Guild was established in 1937 as a volunteer group of women dedicated to assisting the hospital. Over the years the Guild has been involved in numerous fund raising projects donating to the hospital thousands of dollars worth of equipment and furnishings. From 1937 to 1987, it is estimated that the donation figure would exceed \$50,000. The best fund raising activity of the Guild for many years was their Charity Box (second hand store). The Charity Box was officially opened on September 12, 1952 in the Enge Building which was loaned rent free by Mr. and Mrs. Martin Enge. The Charity Box was later located in the old fire hall which had been built in 1926 and moved in 1954 to the corner of Harbor Way and John Longworth Street near the boat harbor. In 1995 the Charity Box (old fire hall) was moved to 1st Ave. across the street from the hospital building. The Charity Box is open Mondays during the summer. The summer of 1996 saw a steady stream of customers

as this work of the Hospital Guild continues to raise money for special needs of the hospital.

The Guild ladies continue to meet one afternoon a month. The hours are spent in sewing and mending such things as lap and foot robes for the elderly, large bibs, and terry cloth slippers. They will sew whatever the hospital staff deems necessary. The original Hospital Guild By-laws stated that those attending meetings would be asked to bring a quarter, the money to be used for the hospital in a manner to be decided upon later. On May 12, 1938 the Hospital Guild held their first Hospital Day Tea and this has been held each year and continues to this day .

March 1947 the need for a new X-ray machine was brought before the Hospital Guild. Mrs. Elsie Clausen was appointed Chairman of the Committee to investigate possible purchase. Miss Mina Olsen said a machine was available immediately if they could raise \$7,000. A drive began to raise fund for this purpose, and the Guild voted to give the entire sum of their Treasury (\$175.00) to it. In October 1947 the Guild met in the Hospital to view the new X-ray machine. Total amount collected by the Guild Fund Drive, spearheaded by Mrs. Clausen and Mrs. Stokke, was \$5,606.41. The balance was taken care of by the City Council.

#### NURSING IN THE "OLD" HOSPITAL

Vang Eglund Tate grew up in Saskatchewan, did her nurses training at Winnipeg General Hospital, and graduated in 1938. Her sister Jo (Eglund) Barnreiter came to Petersburg as a Lutheran missionary nurse, and married Frank Barnreiter, staying in Petersburg. In 1940 Vang took the advice of her sister and moved to Petersburg to work. The following is excerpts from an article written in 1976 by Vang Tate concerning the "old" hospital and nursing in the early days. This article was first published in Petersburg Heritage of the Sea.

" Early nursing in Petersburg in the "old" hospital was a true venture in pioneering. I'm sure that all nurses, as I did, resolved to "change things" to be more closely in line with nursing "down below." You endured the knowing smiles of the veterans and gradually found yourself doing as Petersburgians had been doing for years and find out that things just don't happen that fast in

Alaska.

The hospital was a converted three-story wooden residence, located approximately where the Extended Care Unit is now, facing west. The ground floor contained an office, x-ray room, fracture room (that was used for overflow of any type case), and a small waiting room with the old fireplace that is now in the Clausen Memorial Museum. Behind these rooms was a large room where the Superintendent, Miss Mina Olsen, lived and a kitchen where the nurses ate at a big square table. This was usually the only chance to do reporting on or discussing of all aspects of in-patients care. A two-shelf dumb-waiter took patients' meal trays to and from the second floor, operated with a set of pulleys and ropes. Off the kitchen was the cook's live-in room and a large bathroom for the use of all the staff. It also contained a washing machine with wringer and set-tubs where, for a time the cook was required to wash all the nursery laundry. Seventy-five dollars a month was the cook's salary - no assistant, no dishwasher and no day off!

Directly ahead of the front door was a narrow stairway to the hospital proper. Under the stairs was tucked a dark room for developing x-rays. Stretcher cases would, of necessity, be tipped at an angle to gain entrance through the narrow doorways and up the stairs. The operating room at the top of the stairs also served as the nurse's station where all charting was done. A small instrument and water sterilizer, an autoclave and a scrub sink filled one corner of the room. The walls were lined with instrument cupboards, tables holding solutions and sutures, an instrument tray and table, the chart table and anesthetist's equipment. The operating table occupied the center of the floor under four large surgery lights.

The nursery had been a clothes "closet" and was approximately six feet square. Everything necessary for the care of newborns was kept on the shelves below a counter that held two bassinets, changing pad, and a row of bottles, jars and boxes of necessary items. When premature babes were occupants, the nursery was kept at a temperature of 80 degrees, in lieu of modern incubators. The remainder of the hospital floor consisted of two three-bed wards for men and women and two private rooms - as well as cupboards in the hallway for linens, blankets, pillows, sterilized surgical and obstetrical packs

and equipment, and all medicines. The busiest room, however, was a very small bathroom for the use of ambulatory patients and for tub baths. It was also the utility room where all treatments were prepared, all utensils were emptied, cleaned and stored on shelves above the tub. ....

All extra supplies were kept on the third floor. The nurses were required to carry all soiled linens up these stairs and deposit them in large canvas bags. Then, once a week, the laundry man would trudge up the three sets of stairs and drag the bags down again and out to the plank streets to his truck.

The nursing staff in 1940 consisted of the Superintendent, one 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. day nurse, one 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. nights nurse, and a call-in anesthetist. The superintendent took care of ordering all supplies, did the bookkeeping, took and developed all x-rays, kept surgical and obstetrical supplies, sterile, scrubbed for surgery, and was on call for emergencies all night. Her salary was \$85.00 a month. The day nurse administered medications and treatments, admitted and discharged patients, cleaned and made up units following discharges, assisted in the labor room, and during deliveries, which were set up with the patient's bed for the delivery table. Also, during deliveries she became an impromptu anesthetist, dripping ether onto a gauze cone, as the doctor directed. She had the care of all infants and did all housekeeping, including washing windows, walls, curtains, and mopping floors.

The night nurse's duties duplicated those of the day nurse. However, instead of housekeeping she was assigned baths for all patients, having their beds made up and ready for breakfast by 8:00 a.m. Surgical and obstetrical patients were then kept in bed for approximately ten days. Therefore, complete sponge baths by the nurse, alcohol rubs several times a day, and beds made while occupied, made all procedures slower and more difficult. Lack of exercise by the patients made it necessary to give enemas frequently before baths. Infants were taken out to nurse every four hours and given supplemental feedings in the nursery when necessary by - guess who?

When surgery was slated, the night nurse removed all unnecessary equipment, charts, etc., from the operating room and scrubbed down the walls and every inch of the room in preparation. Then she "floated" during the

surgery - that is, she was the unscrubbed nurse who tied on gowns, stood by to supply any items needed, to wipe the brows of the doctor and scrub nurse, count sponges and stay with the unconscious patient following surgery until the day nurse returned from her lunch - often at 1:00 p.m. Only then could the night nurse drag herself to her rooming house to sleep - fast - before she must return again at 8:00 p.m. for her next twelve-hour shift.

There was no mention of overtime pay - after all, the generous wage was \$75. a month for twelve hours (plus) a day, seven days a week! We were allowed to have our uniforms laundered at hospital expense and an allowance of \$12. a month paid for our rooms and meals were eaten at the hospital.

Empty beds were infrequent, but when patients were few, the time was used to "catch up" on many details. No packaged sterile dressing or disposable anything were then available so we made cotton balls, folded 4" x 4" gauze dressings, spent time cleaning thermometer trays, mending rubber gloves, changing solutions, sterilizing hypodermic needles and syringes, etc., etc. - and coffee breaks were unheard of. Streaking - in full uniform - up and down two sets of stairs was the order of the day or night and it didn't take long to learn which creaky floor boards or stairs were to be avoided so as not to awaken patients. ....

Romance also came into the picture when the day and night nurse vied for the attention and affections of the cook's son. It had a happy ending for me! (Vang) We've been married thirty (fifty) years now!

That "old" hospital WAS old and inconvenient and drafty and an exhausting workhouse BUT it was a GOOD hospital. Much difficult surgery was done, predominantly with success, many babies began life there, including many preemies that "made it" and much TLC was administered along with treatments and procedures. Those old walls saw much suffering, sweat, tears and grief, but they also heard the welcome cry of a newborn babe, and the prayers that were offered and the thankfulness for answered prayers.

They saw , too, the joy of life and love in the eyes of those served and those who served there."

Vang Tate



## FUNDS SOUGHT FOR NEW HOSPITAL

In March 1945 the Alaska Territorial Legislature authorized \$27,500 toward the cost of constructing a new hospital building in Petersburg. June 5, 1945 a special election of the City of Petersburg was held for authorization of matching bonds in the amount of \$27,500. However, at the dedication ceremony of the new Hospital in January of 1955 speaker Ed Locken noted that this money was never received because work was not started until 1952, beyond the legal time limit. Ed Locken noted that in 1945 quite a few thought a nice new hospital would cost about \$20,000.

February, 1946 the Hospital Building Fund received the amount of \$6,423.42 in cash plus a building on Indian Street from the Estate of Charles W. Johnson in accordance with his will.

## LEGISLATION TO ALLOW TOWNS TO OPERATE HOSPITALS

An article in the February 20, 1952 edition of the Petersburg newspaper stated that: House Bill No. 62 presented by Representative Ed Locken of Petersburg will, if passed, correct a situation which has existed in several towns for many years. This is the operation by the towns of hospitals, despite the fact such operation isn't legal. The bill as introduced by Locken would empower city councils of any first class city to "maintain and operate hospitals." In detail the bill provides for building or operating such municipal hospitals "for the care and treatment of the indigent, sick, injured and maternity cases. For this purpose the town council may: "purchase or lease real property therefore." The council may also erect buildings, make improvements and repairs and alter existing buildings for the hospital. Or it may use money raised by taxation and "take such other action as may be necessary to provide hospital facilities."

## NEW HOSPITAL PLANS

On February 4, 1952 Mrs. Carroll Clausen and Mrs. Ragnar Stokke, representing the Hospital Guild, appeared before the City Council with a sketch of a proposed new hospital building as worked out by Miss Mina Olson and members of the Guild.

## LAND PURCHASED, ARCHITECT SELECTED

In October, 1952 the City Council approved purchase of two lots from John Grebstad

for \$2,500. At this meeting Linn Forrest of Juneau was selected as architect for the new hospital. He agreed to a flat fee basis of \$6,000. In view of the fact that the hospital building was to be constructed using partial volunteer labor, no contract would be let.

#### HOSPITAL BUILDING COMMITTEE APPOINTED

On November 5, 1952, Mayor Claire Wilder appointed a Hospital Building Committee of Wilmer Oines, Knut Thompson and Ernest Haugen, all City Council members, and Gordon Jensen, Carl Anderson, Jack DeZordo, Magnus Martens and Adolph Mathisen. The group selected Wilmer Oines chairman and Adolph Mathisen secretary. This was the permanent building committee until the completion of the hospital in January 1955.

#### WORK BEGINS ON NEW HOSPITAL - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The middle of November 1952 saw the actual start of excavation for the basement of the new hospital. An article from the November 22, 1952 Petersburg newspaper says: "There's no doubt about it, Petersburg is going to have a new hospital. Ground was broken today for the new building to be erected on the two lots purchased from John Grebstad recently. Excavation will be finished for the foundation today by the city shovel but a crew of four or more men is needed early Saturday morning to hand trim the ditches. This is work which must be done before further progress can be made. Cement, steel and plywood are already in town and with good luck and an "open winter" the cement work will be done before snow and cold set in. The largest single source of (donated) money has been the Charity Box store, operated under auspices of the Hospital Guild, but every organization in town is doing a share in raising money. Hospital Benefits are varied and every one gets enthusiastic support. But the need now is for a crew of men TOMORROW MORNING. Any man who has the time and the strength to wield a shovel on this job is urged to drop in at the city office this evening or first thing Saturday and Jim Taylor will tell them what to do next." Beginning with the November 28th, 1952 issue of the local newspaper Men Of The Week On Hospital Job was published. This was a weekly roll of honor of men who volunteered for the hospital building crew.

## MONEY GRANTED FOR HOSPITAL

After several trips to Juneau by Mayor Wilder, with Territorial Representative Ed Locken, and Adolph Mathisen followed up by numerous letters and wires to the Territorial Board of Health Petersburg was granted, in July 1953, \$100,000 from the Territory of Alaska towards the building of the hospital. In early 1954 it was decided there were not sufficient funds to complete the hospital building. An application was made to the Alaska Public Works and \$25,000 was authorized for completion of the building.

## NEW HOSPITAL DESCRIBED

A description of the soon to be completed new hospital was published in the August 28, 1953 issue of the Petersburg Newspaper as follows:

Entering the new hospital the visitor or patient will cross a ceilinged outdoor patio into the main hall. Just to the right of the entrance will be a comfortably sized waiting room and nurse's station. In back of this, out of sight will be an examining room for the use of the doctor in charge.

To the left upon entering will be one corridor of rooms equipped with two beds each and ending in a wing which will contain the operating room and delivery room. Looking straight ahead the visitor will find the "administrative" wing of the hospital which will include but one room for patients, the large four bed ward, one bed of which will be a diathermy bed.

In the administrative wing plans call for a dining room which will seat 8 people, an electrically equipped kitchen, a wash room for receptacles, a dumb waiter for laundry, etc. toilets and a small inventory room.

Midway between the two corridors and the proudest thing the hospital will have to offer the visitor will be a nursery which will be large enough to handle six new Petersburgers. The nursery will be enclosed in large glass windows against which new papas can ga-ga and goo-goo with the certainty he is recognized by the newcomer. Of major importance to the well planned building is a delivery room and operating room as two separate units. These well lighted, eleven-foot ceilinged rooms form a wing by themselves which is removed from the center of traffic of patients and visitors. Equipment for the

operating and delivery rooms will be complete with modern surgical and obstetrical apparatus. Small equipment and hundreds of surgical instruments are the property of Dr. Smith.

Halls of the new building will be lined for four feet up from the floor with Marlite, a baked and shiny veneer which will protect the walls from moving beds and other hospital equipment as well as providing a sanitary, non-absorbent surface. The upper wall in the individual rooms will be of fireproof (1 hour test) 5 - 8 inch wall board which will be treated in pastel shades.

Flooring will be of conventional 9 x 9 tiling over which the ladies will probably differ considerably in selecting a uniform pattern.

The roof of the new hospital is designed with reverse functioning as conventional roofs go. This new roof is not designed to shed water but rather to hold it for use as an insulator. Bordered by a raised edge of two inches the roof will shed an excess of 3-4 inches of water through three scuppers spaced through the building. The roof is of many thicknesses; first, from the rafters up is a 5-8 plywood, then 1 inch of spunglass, a layer of tar paper, a layer of tar, and three more layers of tar paper and three more layers of tar alternately. This unconventional roof preserves heat in the winter and excludes heat in the summer and carries a twenty year guarantee against leakage.

The basement and foundation required the efforts of many volunteer workers in driving 175 piles of 12 inch diameter for 6 to 8 feet into the muskeg, assuring floor space equal to half of that on the main floor. Within that space plans have been drawn for a room for nurses relaxation, a doctor's room where the doctor can wait out his calls and relax, a technician's laboratory, a large room for stores, a laundry and a storeroom for furniture.

The outer surface of the hospital will be approximately 30 per cent asbestos shingle in a natural color which never requires treatment, the balance of the outdoor surface will be double paned window. At the bottom of each of the numerous windows will be an opening providing for indirect ventilation with maximum light. Wilmer Oines, councilman who is chairman of the council's hospital operating committee as well as chairman of the hospital building committee is probably the best informed man in hospital affairs in Petersburg. Pressed for an opening date for the new building, Wilmer would not come closer

than "sometime next summer," adding, "and that of course depends upon money, labor available and the weather."

#### CITY ESTABLISHES HOSPITAL BOARD

In 1954 a City ordinance was passed to set up a five member Hospital Board to oversee operation of the hospital. Four members will be appointed for four-year terms and the fifth member to be the finance chairman of the City Council.

#### HOSPITAL DEDICATION

Upon completion of the hospital in January 1955 the town was justifiably proud of their accomplishment. A dedication ceremony was held complete with souvenir program. The Dedication address was given by Ed Locken, and Mrs. Carroll Clausen (Chairman) assisted by Hospital Guild Members, gave a Dedication tea. In the advertisement for the Dedication Ceremony slated for Sunday, January 16, 1955, at 2:00 p.m. the following names are listed: Hospital Building Committee Wilmer Oines, Chairman; L. Adolph Mathisen, Secretary; Knut Thompson, Clair Wilder, Ernest Haugen, Andrew Wikan, Carl Anderson, Magnus Martens, Gordon Jensen, and Jack DeZordo. The Town Council is listed as: Ernest J. Haugen, Mayor, Knut Thompson, Willmer Oines, Andrew Wikan, Verner Israelson, Erling Nicholson, James Hammer, James Taylor, City Clerk and Mrs. Frank Barnreiter, Hospital Superintendent.

#### WILMER OINES REPORTS ON FUND EXPENDITURES

In January of 1955 Wilmer Oines, Chairman of the Hospital Building Committee made the following report to the citizens of Petersburg:

"As chairman of the Petersburg Hospital Building Committee, I wish to inform the citizens of our town what our Committee has done with the funds to which we have had access since the beginning of the building of the hospital.

From the start, we realized that if we were to build a new hospital we would have to do it practically by ourselves - an impossibility unless the whole town would get behind it and see it through to its completion. So, beginning from "scratch", groups of local citizens took it upon themselves to begin the initial work involving hours of labor and other donations of various kinds. These

beginnings spurred the community on to completing the job . Because of this, we have a hospital with a probable less cost than anywhere else in the Territory or the States. In my contacts with men in position to know, (bidding contractors, engineers, etc.) the cost of hospitals vary from \$12,000. to \$20,000 per bed. OUR HOSPITAL COST US \$8,000. per bed. ... Ours is one in which the entire town has had a share in building and of which we can be justly proud.

#### HOSPITAL FINANCIAL REPORT

##### Source of Funds:

City Bonds	\$20,500.00
Repaid From General Fund	4,000.00
Cash on Hand at Start of Project	1,761.40
Aid from Alaska Public Works	11,750.00
Grant From Territory	100,000.00
Donations of Cash, Etc.	<u>19,477.10</u>
TOTAL	157,488.50

##### Expenditures to complete project

Plumbing & Heating	30,230.00
Electrical Work (Labor & Material)	15,000.00
Architect	6,000.00
Cabinets & Mill Work	16,064.00
Furnishings	10,048.72
Hardware	2,500.00
All Labor Except Electrical	33,962.30
All Lumber & Building Materials	40,032.40
Miscellaneous Expense	<u>8,151.08</u>
TOTAL	161,988.50

Expenditures to Complete Hospital	161,988.50
Cash on Hand	<u>157,488.50</u>
DEFICIT	4,500.00

Expenditures	161,988.50
Donated Labor	<u>12,235.00</u>
Actual Cost of Building	174,223.50

Submitted by  
WILMER OINES,  
Chairman, Hospital Building Committee"

#### RANDOM THOUGHTS AT TIME OF DEDICATION

From the Random Thoughts section of the newspaper January 1955 comes the

following: Many who attend the Dedication ceremony Sunday will remember in the late 1940's how the whole town stood divided in three camps when three sites were debated on as possible locations for a new hospital. Arguments got rather hot along about that time and there were some who seemed to think the construction of a new building would begin very soon; little did we imagine that by the time construction actually did begin, we would be less concerned about where and more concerned with when. Yes, eight years later, the old building looked about the same; of course the city was forced to spend increasingly more money on up keep, the foundation gave evidence it was getting tired of holding the building up, and more and more ex-patients were telling all their friends that the old hospital left much to be desired. Came the year 1952 when the new hospital was started and as those volunteer workers excavated the basement while others went in search of pilings, another strong force became evident: an a grand force it was and is: YOU, the people of this community, many who are now living in some other town and others who are no longer among the living. All have contributed something to this fitting monument of community enterprise. So pat yourself on the back and your neighbor or take a little bow: you have done a wonderful job!

#### POLIO

Newspaper clippings in the Hospital Guild scrapbook dated 1955 show the growing concern with the dreaded disease of polio. September,6, 1955 : Mrs. Jean Ridley, superintendent of the hospital reported Thursday morning that the much needed Polio Pack machine was expected here by air freight some time that day. A photo from the next weeks newspaper shows the Emerson Polio Pack being readied for use by nurse Mrs. Arlene Otness. An article in the September paper lists doners and donations to the Polio Pack equipment in the amount of \$406. "Where but in the town of Petersburg, could such an amount of money be raised, without a campaign?" asked Mrs. Jean Ridley, superintendent of the hospital. During this same time period a fund raising drive was underway to purchase an iron lung. Newspaper clippings from July 1956 note the arrival of the iron lung which was on display in the waiting room at the hospital. The same page of the scrap book has a clipping captioned "Salk Vaccine Available For All to 19 Years of Age".

## HOSPITAL SUPERINTENDENTS - DOCTORS 1951 - 1972

Miss Mina Olson was hospital Superintendent until 1953. Due to the growth of the hospital it became necessary to divide the hospital work into different departments. Consequently she resigned her position as superintendent to take charge of the x-ray and diathermy departments which is a full time job. Following Mina Olson as Hospital Superintendent were: Jo Barnreiter, Jeanne Ridley, Jean Norheim, Francis Norton, and Vang Tate. In May 1960, Florence LeRoy was appointed superintendent of the hospital, and she served until 1980. Sometime during her tenure Mrs. LeRoy's title was changed to Hospital Administrator and Joy Janssen became Director of Nursing.

Dr. D.A. Coon moved to Petersburg in 1961 and continues his practice in the community to date (1997) although his hospital privileges have been suspended. Dr. Helen M. Schmidt came in August 1968 to assist Dr. Russell Smith who was seriously ill. After Dr. Smith's death she stayed until Dr. Dale Cloyd arrived in 1969 to take over Dr. Smith's practice. Dr. Cloyd moved to Sitka in December 1969.

## LONG TERM CARE WING

In 1965 the Petersburg Hospital Board began working on plans to add a long-term care wing. Florence LeRoy and the Petersburg Hospital Board were the driving forces behind the addition which was dedicated on July 20, 1969. The addition was completed at a cost of \$460,000, including \$200,000 in Federal Hill - Burton funds, \$140,000 in State monies and \$120,000 raised by local bond. According to the April 7, 1967 Petersburg newspaper: Mrs. LeRoy said "the addition will have 12 long-term care beds and it will be attached to the present structure to provide for transportation of patients between the buildings. The addition will be a one-story structure of concrete and steel and will blend well with the existing building. It will occupy most of what is now lawn area on the west side of the building".

## NEW KITCHEN

A new kitchen was built for the hospital in April 1974 at a cost of \$100,000. The new kitchen is on the lower floor of the long-term care unit and was part of the overall plan adopted when the hospital was expanded to 25 beds in 1969. The new kitchen would have been thought highly of by Flora Tate who cooked for many years in the old



hospital. She is remembered fondly by the many nurses who worked with her. Among Flora's many duties in the early days was the nursery laundry. When the health department discovered she was washing diapers in the kitchen with the nurses hanging the diapers in the upstairs of the hospital to dry, they put a stop to it.

Nurse Elda Reid worked administering anesthesia for 25 years starting in 1948. The anesthesia method Elda was trained in was a mixture of ether and chloroform. She was the anesthesiologist for many surgeries working with both Dr. Smith and Dr. Coon.

In January of 1961 the Town of Petersburg passed ordinance 165 authorizing the Hospital Board to establish a system of accounts and procedures for collecting revenues from the operation of the hospital and a system for paying all expenses of operation and costs of services and equipment purchased. The Chairman of the Finance Committee (of the City Council) shall be the liaison between the City Council and the Hospital Board.

The Petersburg Pilot reported in April 1974 that economically the hospital is expected to (and does) operate in the black, with an annual budget of about \$304,000. With the lowest hospital rates in Southeastern Alaska, Petersburg General Hospital is considered one of the most financially responsible and solvent facilities in the state.

#### ADJACENT LAND PURCHASED

In January of 1976 long time Petersburg resident Andrew Wikan donated \$24,000 to the hospital. Wikan's donation was to be used to purchase adjacent land for expansion of the hospital. Between 1978 and 1983 the hospital purchased the property and homes on block 5 owned by Joyce Jenkins, Patti Norheim and Esther and Don Ryan. The four homes on these two pieces of property were moved to other locations in Petersburg. The hospital also arranged a land trade, purchase agreement with the Masons for a 100' x 100' lot they owned. The hospital now owned the entirety of block 5 and were ready for construction of the much needed addition to the hospital.

Dr. Tom Wood moved to Petersburg in 1976 and practiced until he moved to California

in June of 1993

### 1983 NEW HOSPITAL

By May of 1982 Petersburg General Hospital had developed a state-wide reputation of being in desperate need of upgrade with many state and federal code violations. This bad reputation worked in the hospitals favor as the State granted \$9.15 million for the building of a large addition to the hospital. Former Mayor Ernest Haugen had by this time become Alaska State Representative Haugen he must be given a great deal of credit for obtaining this grant. The new (newer) hospital was dedicated November 18, 1984. It includes 11 acute care beds and 14 long term care beds. In comparison with the \$3,500 cost of Petersburg's first hospital, the total value of land, structures and equipment of the Hospital in 1984 was \$9,852,626.

The 1955 section of the hospital continued to be used during the construction of the 1983 addition. Following completion of the addition discussion began with the City over possible uses of the "old" hospital. It was eventually torn down, a portion of that site is now the location of the Joy Janssen Clinic.

### CLINIC

Petersburg Doctors have traditionally had their own private practices with privileges at the hospital. When the State Medical Board restricted Dr. Coon's emergency room privileges in 1991 the hospital began hiring interim Doctors to help with emergency room coverage.

With the suspension of Dr. Coon's hospital privileges in January 1993, and the departure of Dr. Wood in June of 1993, it became apparent that something had to be done to provide more medical care for the community and emergency room coverage for the hospital. The search was on for two full time doctors and a physicians assistant to be employed by the hospital. Dr. Mark Tuccillo came in September of 1993. Dr. Walter Fernau became a full time hospital employee in September of 1994 and Physicians Assistant Claudia Heath was hired in November of 1994.

In November of 1994 the Joy Janssen clinic was dedicated. The new clinic was

named in honor of Joy Janssen who worked for Petersburg General Hospital for 29 years and was director of nursing for many of those years. The 3,700 square foot \$900,000 clinic was built in just five months using pre-built modular units. The clinic is located on a portion of the land occupied by the 1955 hospital building.

#### NO TAX DOLLARS

Petersburg Medical Center is indeed a public institution, but it does not run on money from the city. Rather than tax dollars, the hospital's \$4.2 million budget is funded strictly by user fees. About 16 percent of the hospital's receipts are paid by insurance companies, 15 percent by private payers and 69 percent by Medicare and Medicaid.

#### MORE INFORMATION WANTED

When I began compiling information for a History of the Petersburg Hospital I had no idea what a large project I had undertaken. The goal was to have the history written for the annual Hospital Guild Silver Tea. I now realize there is a lot more information to be gathered but in honor of the Hospital Guild Women and the annual Silver Tea I am making available what I have compiled to this date. If you have corrections or further history you would like to share please contact me, Jean Ellis.

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the Petersburg General Hospital & Long Term Care Facility Board recognizes that our community health facility is more than a hospital and nursing home and does now also include a physician medical clinic, home health, laboratory, radiology, physical therapy, and emergency services, thus resulting in a fully integrated medical delivery system.

And Whereas, it being the tenth anniversary of the principal facility which was dedicated on November 29, 1984.

And Whereas, the nursing home wing, which was dedicated in 1969, with the upper level being renovated last year and the lower level being renovated in 1986.

And Whereas, the new medical clinic wing was completed and occupied on October 22, 1994, after a construction period of less than six months.

And Whereas, the Board has chosen a new name for the entire medical complex and desires to give a special name recognition to the new clinic wing.

And Whereas, Joy Janssen, R.N., former Director of Nursing, has given 30 years of dedicated, generous, selfless, tireless, and friendly care and service to the community and this health facility.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that by Board action of October 25, 1994, the Board does hereby officially proclaim and change the name of the entire facility to be known as the Petersburg Medical Center.

AND IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that the new clinic shall henceforth be known as the Joy Janssen Wing of the Petersburg Medical Center.

Dated this 19th day of November, 1994.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
PETERSBURG MEDICAL CENTER

Sue Flint, President  
Phil Beardslee, V. President  
Nancy Berg, Secretary  
Gary Grandy, Administrator

Sam Bunge  
Jean Ellis  
Laura Nelson  
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**BUILDING PHASES**  
**Petersburg Medical Center**

- 1917 Smith home was converted into the first hospital in Petersburg at the site where long-term care currently is.**
- 1922 Petersburg City buys the hospital marking the beginning of PMC**
- 1955 New hospital is built replacing the converted Smith home**
- 1969 Long-term Care wing was built**
- 1976 Other property was purchased to comprise the entire block between 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> and Excel & Fram Streets**
- 1984 The new hospital was built in its existing site. Included, were acute care, outpatient services, and the connection to long-term care.**
- 1994 Joy Janssen Clinic was constructed. The new complex including acute care, long-term care, emergency, lab, x-ray and the new clinic was renamed Petersburg Medical Center.**
- 1993 Property was acquired between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets. The building was eventually demolished for parking space. Parking was not added until 1999.**
- 1998 – 1999 Additional properties were purchased on adjacent lots for future building needs.**
- 2011 – Clinic remodeled and expanded**
- Total square footage – entire building = 47,251 s.f.**