

Dr. W. L. McBride, M. D.



and

Prairie Hospitals

THIS COLLECTION OF HISTORY IS

INTENDED AS

A SMALL TRIBUTE TO

DR. WILLIAM L. McBRIDE,

DR. JOHN C. STRAUB

and

THEIR WILLING HELPERS.

TO AN EARLY, SMALL EMERGENCY UNIT, **SEIBERT HOSPITAL**

and to

FLAGLER HOSPITAL--REALIZATION OF A DREAM!

TO THOSE SPECIAL FAMILIES WHO PROVIDED

AN ULTIMATE IN FINEST MEDICAL CARE,

DURING A SPAN OF MANY YEARS

SERVING A VERY FORTUNATE RURAL COMMUNITY.

Flagler Historical Society

William L. McBride, M.D., and Prairie Hospitals

William Lucien McBride was born October 19, 1885, and was a son of Robert Hastings and Mary Arletta (*Young*) McBride. This event occurred southeast of Formosa, Kansas, at 7:00 AM during a heavy rain storm. He weighed in at 8 pounds, and was pronounced a pretty baby, pleasing a proud father very much.

Robert Hastings McBride, father of William L., was born in Illinois, on October 1, 1849. His family moved to Nodaway County, Missouri in Civil War days. They later moved to Bellville, Kansas in 1870. It was near this place that Robert Hastings McBride taught school and practiced his trade of carpentry in the town of Omio, Kansas.

Mary Arletta Young, mother of William L. McBride, married his father on October 26, 1884, at Uncle Tom McBride's farm (*no relation*). They were married by Judge M.C. Roberts. Mary was born at Lowell, Indiana, on September 28, 1868. She came to Kansas with her parents when she was just 3 years old. Mary Arletta attended school at Butler School District #60, where Robert McBride served as school master. A sister of Mary, Anna Young, was born September 9, 1870, and died at age three of diphtheria. She was buried at Caldwell Cemetery there.

William Young, father of Mary Arletta McBride, settled on 200 acres of land three miles southeast of Formosa, Kansas. He later sold 40 acres of this land. On his acreage was a log cabin where a sister of Mary named Nellie, was born on October 30, 1882. Mr. Young built a new house on higher ground in years that followed after flood waters apparently lapped at the old log cabin. It was in this newly build house, in a north east bed room that William Lucien McBride was born. (*Obit. says Mankato, Ks.*). William Young served throughout the Civil War and became a successful farmer in Kansas. He died of Bright's Disease at the age of 36 years in 1880, at Lowell, Indiana, after having held a sale at the home place. His wife, Saphrona (*Jones*) Young remarried John Kelly, a Civil War Veteran, who was a clerk at the R.G. Patterson Store in Omio, Kansas.

Included at this point is a small bit of history about Omio, Kansas, as remembered in his later years by Dr. W.L. McBride. It would seem proper to record this, an interesting account of a town's demise.

Omio was an inland town, larger than Formosa finally became. The Rock Island Railroad was involved as was usually the case in locating towns as trackage was laid in 1887. The rail line had been surveyed through Concordia and Omio, Kansas, but when Concordia refused to put up money to aid in this venture, a route of the roadbed was changed farther north. A big bridge was built across Marsh Creek and a new town of Formosa was established by the rail line. Buildings were moved from Omio to Formosa, including a first house of Robert and Mary. This house is still standing (*1967*). Stone buildings were torn down in Omio and rebuilt at Formosa. Omio, Kansas had two doctors, Dr. Morse and Dr. Johnson. There were two hotels, two blacksmith shops, a jewelry store, several mercantile stores, a livery barn, and hardware stores, making up a

very active country town. Frank Lydick and Mrs. Fred Johnson, sister in law of Lafe Johnson, were sources of information of Omio. Mrs. Johnson was an Amy girl. She lived near John Kelly and told of picking gooseberries, then walking to Omio to sell them for 10 cents per quart.

During his early childhood, William McBride witnessed disease when his sister Emma suffered miserably with scarlet fever. He contracted this disease also, remembering a pop gun his father had brought him, along with peeling skin after the siege was over. He witnessed broken bones, childbirth and its losses during this early time. He must have questioned medical ability of a local doctor. Dr. Johnson, who appears in childhood memories, seemed to be rather lax or inept in his profession. He remembered a Doctor Saunders who diagnosed his own bout with scarlet fever, after severe headaches and a trip to J.D. Robinson's store at Jewell City, Kansas. His memory of Dr. Saunders was of a rather timid man who referred his father to Dr. Crews. Dr. Crews was "tall, quiet, and a fellow one could place trust in." He confided in Mr. McBride that William was a very sick child. One must wonder if these experiences might have been a seed which caused William L. McBride to choose a medical profession.

Emma McBride, aunt of William L., suffered lasting effects from her bout with scarlet fever. She was cared for by Dr. Johnson who lanced her throat, attempting to treat an infected gland. She always had difficulty swallowing in years that followed. She once choked and nearly died while eating a piece of meat. She was left with a crippled hand from her ordeal. Emma married Lafe Johnson, a musician and laborer. They adopted a baby boy, Teddy Shaw, whose mother died during childbirth. Teddy's father, living on the Alex Hirst farm north west of Formosa, remarried and moved to Iowa. About 1908, Lafe was putting up ice on the John Kelly farm and met with an accident, causing a serious break in one of his legs. He was unable to work for a long time. At Emma's request, Mr. Shaw returned from Iowa and took his boy back, since Lafe and Emma were unable to care for him. Memories of Dr. McBride add to this time: "Bess and I visited the family on July 8th, 1908 before the accident and they still had the adopted child." (Teddy Shaw).

Robert and Mary McBride moved soon after Omio was abandoned, to Randall, Kansas, where they lived for one year. Here Robert studied law under Judge Handley. It was during this time, when William L. McBride was 5 years old, he contracted scarlet fever. He and his mother had taken a train to Jewell, Kansas, by train to shop. He remembered a severe headache followed by total unconsciousness. When he began to recover, he attempted to retrieve some pennies he had saved from a dresser drawer nearby. Because of his weakness, he could not walk and fell, bumping his head. This resulted in another severe headache. After this, he quickly recovered. His brother, John, who was just a baby, did not contract the disease as was feared. Robert and Mary soon sold their land at Randall and moved to Mankato, Kansas where they bought an 80 acre tract. Robert built a house and moved into it in 1893. Brother John was 3 years old and William L. was 8. Shingles of this house were dipped in linseed oil and ochre, a pigment, before they were laid. In 1947, 55 years after the house was built, the roof remained in good shape. Robert Hastings McBride practised as an attorney and died February 10, 1933, at 83 years, 4 months and 10 days. Mary Young McBride remarried Jesse E. Dillman on February 18, 1936, he died October 13, 1936 of coronary thrombosis.



William Lucian McBride

In 1908, Bessie Pearl Omer, daughter of George and Harriet Omer, became the bride of William L. McBride. She was born on a farm near Jewell, Kansas, on October 23, 1886. She lived with her parents in the vicinity of Mankato, Kansas, graduating from high school at Mankato in 1906. After graduation she taught school until 1908, when she and William L. McBride were married. He had finished school at Mankato and attended college at Manhattan, Kansas. The couple established their first home in Woodward, Oklahoma, where they resided for two years. They moved then to Kansas City, Kansas, where she studied medicine

along with her husband, at the Kansas City College of Medicine and Surgery. Dr. W.L. McBride graduated here in 1917 and opened a practice at Burr Oak, Kansas, accompanied by a very efficient medical assistant, his wife.

A tax stamp, issued by the United States Internal Revenue Service for, "manufacturer, distributor, etc. of Opium, etc." was issued to Dr. W.L. McBride on September 18, 1917, for the year, 1918. A reason for its reduced cost of .84 cents is unknown. The location listed for use of the stamp was Burr Oak, Kansas. *(This document suggests Dr. McBride opened his first practice about 11 miles northwest of his home town in 1917 after graduating that year).* On this stamp was a notation, "Transfer from Burr Oak, Kansas to Seibert, Colorado on 6/7/1918. On this document were other notations: "Colorado Reg. No. 5042," Number of certificate, 213430.



Bessie Pearl Omer

Another tax stamp for the year, 1919, was issued on July 3, 1918, to Wm. L. McBride, M.D., number 16175. It listed, as a place for its use--Seibert, Colo., and displayed a similar taxation. It was issued at Denver, Colorado. This information suggests Dr. McBride moved to Seibert, Colorado about June 7, 1918. An answer to a question, "Why did he come to Eastern Colorado?" is answered in one quoted account: "Because he and a friend, the late Dr. L.R. Nutter of Joes, Colorado, heard doctors were needed out there."

On the following page are reproduced copies of "Stamp For Special Tax" for the years of 1918 and 1919.

213430

\$ 84c

213430

UNITED STATES

CAMPEOR SPECIAL TAX

INTERNAL REVENUE

RECEIVED FROM
Dr. H. A. Fisher YOUR REGISTRY NO. VS. *5883*

the sum of *84 cents* \$*790* Dollars for
SPECIAL TAX ON
MANUFACTURER, DISTRIBUTOR, ETC., OF OPIUM, ETC.

UNDER ACT OF DECEMBER 17, 1914.

at *Burr Oak,*
State of *KANSAS* for the period represented by the Coupons here attached.
W. H. Lipperell
Collector.

Dated at *Wichita, Kans.*
Sept 18
Dist.

Section 3213, Revenue Act of 1914, provides:
"Any person who manufactures or distributes opium shall be liable to pay a special tax on such manufacture or distribution, and any trade or business carried on by such person shall not be exempted from such tax by reason of the laws of any State, Territory, or Possession authorizing the non-remuneration of such trade or business contrary to such State."

\$1

State of *KANSAS*
OWNERSHIP NOT TRANSFERABLE

\$1

4

Coupon for M ^{FR} ., DISTRIBUTER, ETC., OF OPIUM, ETC., RATE OF \$1 SPECIAL TAX for Dec.,	1918.
Coupon for M ^{FR} ., DISTRIBUTER, ETC., OF OPIUM, ETC., RATE OF \$1 SPECIAL TAX for Jan.,	1919.
Coupon for M ^{FR} ., DISTRIBUTER, ETC., OF OPIUM, ETC., RATE OF \$1 SPECIAL TAX for Feb.,	1919.
Coupon for M ^{FR} ., DISTRIBUTER, ETC., OF OPIUM, ETC., RATE OF \$1 SPECIAL TAX for March,	1919.
Coupon for M ^{FR} ., DISTRIBUTER, ETC., OF OPIUM, ETC., RATE OF \$1 SPECIAL TAX for April,	1919.
Coupon for M ^{FR} ., DISTRIBUTER, ETC., OF OPIUM, ETC., RATE OF \$1 SPECIAL TAX for May,	1919.
Coupon for M ^{FR} ., DISTRIBUTER, ETC., OF OPIUM, ETC., RATE OF \$1 SPECIAL TAX for June,	1919.

\$ 1.00
 YOUR REGISTRY NO. IS 5072
 16175
UNITED STATES
COMPTROLLER GENERAL
INTERNAL REVENUE
 RECEIVED FROM
Spec. L. M. Bred. M. S.
 the sum of **100** Dollars for
MANUFACTURER, DISTRIBUTOR, ETC. OF OPION, ETC.
 UNDER ACT OF DECEMBER 17, 1914.
 at *Leebert,* *Kat Carson*
State of Colorado for the period represented by the Coupon
 Coupons hereto attached,
Mark A. Skinner
 Collector
 Dated at *Denver, Colo.*
JUL 3 - 1918
Dist.
 State of
 OWNERSHIP NOT TRANSFERABLE
\$1

Tax Stamp issued to Wm. L. McBride, M.D. in 1918
at Seibert, Colorado.

Dr. McBride's apparent admiration for horses may have developed during his many early calls which were made on horseback and by horse and buggy. About this time, a more reliable and much more rapid means of travel came into use, the automobile. It had been in existence for some time but improvements had made it more popular. It is said Dr. W.L. McBride wore out a "flivver" (*probably a Model T Ford*) during his first year at Seibert, "rattling around from farm to ranch when the influenza of World War I was at its worst."

Typical of Dr. McBride's early practice was a trip by railroad hand car from Seibert to Vona, Colorado on the Rock Island track. A vicious snow storm had blocked most trails. He rented a horse at Vona and rode a mile north and one mile east to the Bigelow place to assist in a birth. The baby, Alma Biglow, had already arrived but the doctor was very welcome. (*History of Kit Carson, County, 1988*).

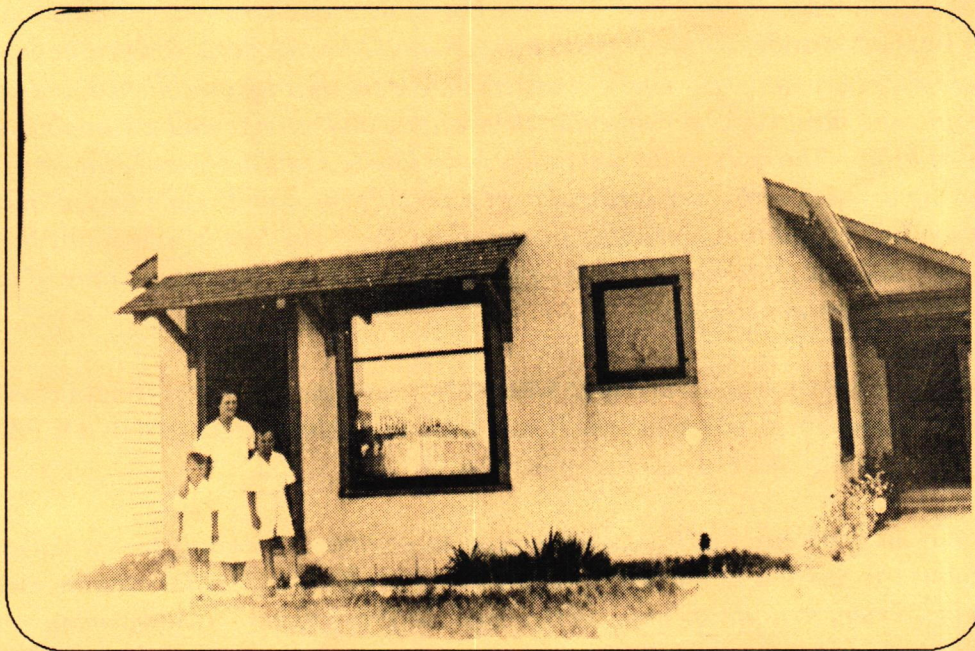
Blizzards of winter drifted roads over with snow, making the automobile useless. During these times, medical calls were made by horseback and by horse-drawn sled. Fosha Gorton of Seibert, Colorado, could recall two occasions when Dr. McBride's automobile sailed by at high speed near their country home, leaving a cloudy trail of dust. One occasion was followed by news of a young boy who had died in the area. Another time was followed by news of a snake bite, which was treated by Dr. McBride.

Dr. McBride and his wife, Bess were often observed astride two of a number of horses they owned. Fosha Gorton remembered seeing Dr. McBride and his wife in their leisure hours riding about the countryside. Fosha said Dr. McBride kept these horses in a pasture west of Seibert. This was in the vicinity of that steep hill between Flagler and Seibert. (*often referred to as "Dead man's hill"*). Hilma Vaseka also liked riding horses and purchased a beautiful "paint" horse with saddle from Dr. McBride. Some time later, Dr. McBride bought them back, the paint horse was trained and was one of a group of horses doing a quadrille at "Seibert Day" in later years. (*Some memories of this very early time were contributed by Hilma Vaseka's nephew, Wayne Garrett*). The McBride family, when in Seibert, lived in the house presently occupied (1989) by Emma Boren.

In September, 1918, Dr. McBride and Dr. J.V. Beachley of Stratton, Colorado organized the Kit Carson Medical Association. Certainly there was a need and Dr. McBride served as secretary for twenty years. Dr. E.W. Reid of Flagler and Dr. Frank L. Bergen of Burlington were original members. Among others not conveniently recorded were Drs. Neff and H.L. Williams of Flagler. In 1937, Kit Carson Medical Association's name was changed to Eastern Colorado Medical Society. In previous times, earliest doctors living here were Drs. Paul B. Godsman and C.A. Gillett, both of Burlington. It is said they were the only doctors in this plains area from Goodland, Kansas to Denver, Colorado. Dr. Godsman moved to Hoyt, Colorado and practiced later in Flagler and Seibert. Dr. Godsman appears in many places in early history. He performed an autopsy when Henry Hatch was murdered west of Flagler. This was the first recorded murder in Kit Carson County. Dr. Godsman studied law and practised in Kit Carson and Cheyenne Counties. He made an unsuccessful attempt in Colorado politics. As time progressed, doctors arrived to fill medical needs. Recorded among earliest doctors in the area were Drs. Allen and Schroyer.

A dire need for a hospital in our plains area became very apparent to Dr. McBride. Patients needing surgery had to be sent to Denver by rail in those early days and many were not able to withstand such an extended time and trip. Dr. McBride was driven to establish an emergency hospital in Seibert after losing a patient in the winter of 1924. His patient, a Mr. Brown, was father of six children and died of a ruptured appendix. Although his place was only a few miles off a passable road, snow blocked the way. He was hauled by horse-drawn sled to the railroad station and sent to Denver by train. There were no antibiotics or sulfa then. Dr. McBride is quoted: "By the time Mr. Brown reached the operating table, it was too late as Peritonitis had developed. With a hospital near at hand, I could have saved him." It was incidents such as this which troubled Dr. McBride very much, causing him to yearn for a hospital in this area.

In 1925, Dr. McBride established a small emergency hospital in Seibert, Colorado. This old building is still standing in 1989. It is now the first house south of the present Seibert Post Office on the west side of main street, south of old Hwy. 24. Older members of the community remember this building. It was thought to be of a Spanish style, with a white stucco exterior. In years that followed, a peaked roof and additions to the front were made. Today, 1989, Victor Amen operates a shoe shop in this building.



Seibert Emergency Hospital established in 1925 by Dr. W.L. McBride. Standing in front of the building is Hilma Vasecka (nurse), Robert and Annabelle (Children of Dr. & Mrs. McBride).

In 1925, Dr. McBride traveled to Chicago where he attended classes in surgical techniques and antiseptic procedures at Cook County Hospital. Best sources tell us his instructor was Dr. Max Thorek, renowned surgeon of this time. Procedures and expertise he learned were put into practice at the new emergency hospital in Seibert. Dr. McBride was first to practice antiseptic

surgery in this plains area, introducing new antiseptic techniques he had learned in Chicago. He developed new techniques which were later made standard procedures in most medical facilities. It is said, this hospital was the only surgical hospital between Colby, Kansas and Denver, Colorado. Memory exists of his laboratory equipment, including a microscope, which was used to provide better medical treatment for hospital patients.

A new medical innovation, an X-ray machine was purchased for the hospital in years that followed, being the only machine of its kind in the area. (*A remaining x-ray tube for this machine still exists in Flagler Historical Society holdings*). Wayne Garrett remembered Frank Vasecka telling about moving that new X-ray machine from a hand cart at the railroad depot to the Seibert Hospital. Frank said either he and George Simon, Sr. were very strong, or too dumb to refuse the job. They loaded it on a lumber wagon and moved it into the hospital. It was just about all they could handle. A few records remain of activities of this hospital: "George Winkler had his tonsils taken out last week at Seibert Hospital." (*Flag. News, 1931*). Several items appear of operations and care given by the Seibert Hospital. Frank and Hilma Vasecka lived in the basement of this hospital after they were married. Hilma, who had served the community with maternity care in the Roller building during early years, worked then as a nurse for Dr. McBride. The Roller building was located on the east side of main street in Seibert, south of highway 24.

On January 28, 1933, tragedy visited the McBride home. Our best recorded information is in the obituary of Bessie McBride. *"Fifteen years ago, Dr. and Mrs. McBride located in Seibert, Colorado, where they accomplished a most commendable work, having established and operated successfully a splendid hospital, a monument to their ability and energy, and a valuable asset to the community at large. Throughout the years they have labored faithfully and efficiently, side by side, she having assisted with a very critical operation only the day that she was attacked by her fatal illness. Thus in addition to the loss sustained by home and family, always by the loss of a wife and mother, does this husband meet an irreparable loss in the sharer, not only of his joys and sorrows, but his every activity of life."*

Mrs. McBride contracted influenza at a time when there were many patients about the area suffering from this same illness. Perhaps long hours of helping others, and assisting Dr. McBride with care of patients, contributed to severity of her illness.

"A last tribute to Bessie Pearl McBride, whose departure removes a beautiful and valuable personality, one whose mission as she interpreted it was a work of kindly ministrations, memories of which are a monument to a life spent in service, and the promotion of love, harmony and happiness to those about her." (Obit., 1933)

Of this early time, Foshia Gorton remembered the family taking meals for a while at the Gorton home and of caring for a bull dog the doctor owned when the family left on a trip. It was thought a prowler upset the dog which was shut in the Gorton home and this caused it to be upset. He scratched gashes in wood trim and tore window curtains to shreds.

Gortons had a terrier who loved to fight, it got along quite well with the doctor's dog. It was a common sight to see Gorton's dog making its way up a street with McBride's bull dog following

some distance behind. When Gorton's dog encountered another dog, a fight was generally seen. The bull dog would usually arrive for the finale. As time went on, it was not uncommon to see dogs scurrying from the path of these two dogs, traveling in single file as they proceeded up a street.

Financial disasters and dust of the 1930's did not slow up the number of patients at Seibert hospital, perhaps created even more. Dr. McBride realized a larger facility was sorely needed. Efforts to finance such a structure at this depressed time were of little value; however, this desire remained with him as he continued to serve the community. In spite of life's adversities and disappointments, his dream continued on, becoming a challenge to be dealt with. Annabelle, an only daughter, continued her schooling at Seibert High School, Robert, an only son, continued his pre-medic studies at Boulder, Colorado.

On June 2, 1934, Dr. W.L. McBride and Zetah Straub of Flagler, Colorado were married. A news item states that Mr. and Mrs. McBride spent a few days in Denver. Mr. John Straub, her husband had been fatally injured in 1929. Their children were John, Douglas, and Meridith.



Dr. & Mrs McBride. This photograph was taken in 1941

Dr. McBride continued to study plans and options to establish a larger hospital in our area, including a possibility of building a new building.

It was in 1937, a two story structure in the Town Of Flagler, formerly the Hotel Flagler and perfect for needs of a larger hospital, became available.

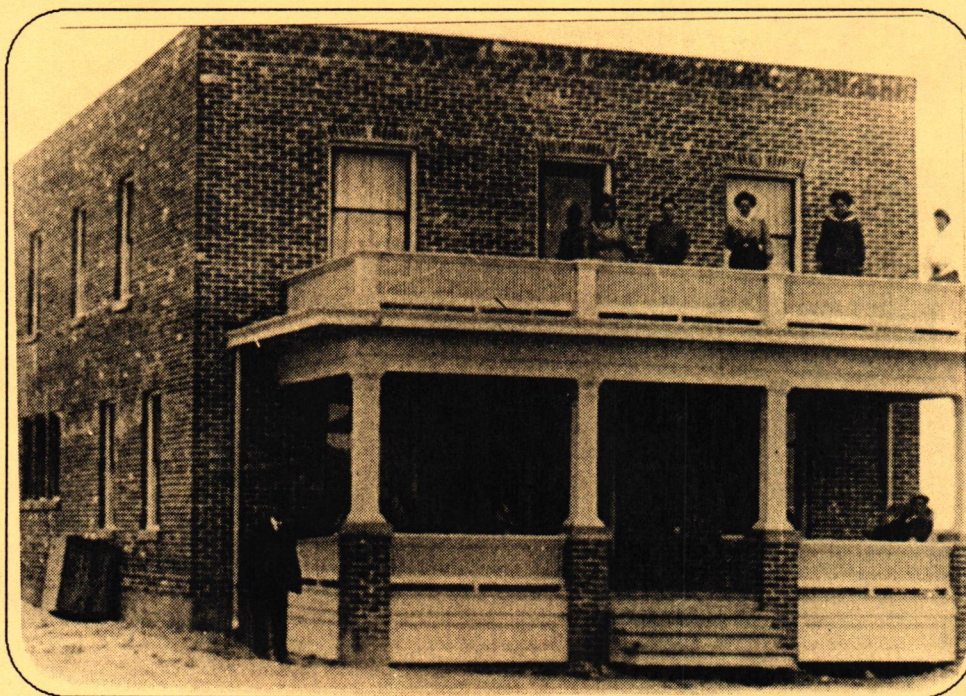
A Short History of Hotel Flagler

Hotel Flagler was built in late 1908 and 1909, a far sighted project much ahead of its time, by W.L. Price and W.H. Lavington.

Much research has gone into trying to determine the builder of this large red brick building. A best guess is that Mr. Clyde Fuller had a hand in this endeavor. According to one of the earliest pictures of the building, taken before adequate steps were constructed from sidewalk into the building, had written into emulsion of the photo, "Clyde Fuller--Proprietor."

Another picture upon which is written a date, 1908 (we think incorrectly) is a trapeze act by the Lucas family being performed with Hotel Flagler in the background. It is known the Lucas family operated Hotel Flagler for a time from other sources.

Blanche (Lipford) Carper remembered her family driving up in front of the hotel in an elegant horse drawn surrey about 1913. She remembered an Allen family operating the hotel at this time. Misfortune visited the Allen family and provided history of happenings at Hotel Flagler. Mrs.



Hotel Flagler, as it appeared shortly after it was built in 1909. It was of red brick construction. Walls were framed using 2" X 4" demension lumber which was sheated solidly with 1" lumber. An air gap exists between brick and lumber. Lathe and plaster completed the interior walls.

Allen made a trip east to visit relatives. While she was gone, Mr. Allen hired a lady from Vona, Mrs. Frank Schlyer as a cook. Mr. Schlyer heard rumors causing him to believe her activities went beyond cooking. On March 21, 1913, he traveled to Flagler and slipped into the Allen bedroom, hiding himself behind a bureau in the room. Later, when he observed his wife and Mr. Allen embracing, he appeared from behind the bureau.

Mr. Allen ran from the room, but he was not fast enough to escape a bullet from Mr. Schlyer's gun. At a trial in May, 1913, at Burlington, Mr. Frank Schlyer was acquitted by a jury, the "unwritten law" was cited by defense. This was the second murder recorded in our area, the first being of Henry Hatch, west of Flagler.



Another view of Hotel Flagler shortly after it was constructed.

About 1915, H.B. Blancken moved in from the northwest country and began as proprietor of Hotel Flagler. He was the proprietor when Will Borland moved to Flagler and became publisher of the Flagler News. A description of one of the rooms is included in the book, "Country Editors Boy" by Hal Borland. "The

room's two windows had white lace curtains and green roller shades, and on the floor was a big linoleum rug with red roses on a tan background. There were two chairs, one a rocker, two iron beds, and a varnished oak commode. On the commode's white marble top were a big china wash bowl and a matching water pitcher, white with sprigs of red roses. In the cupboard beneath were a big enameled slop pail and two chamber pots sprigged with roses to match the pitcher and bowl. The heads and feet of the beds of white iron rods in elaborate scrolls and each corner post had a bright brass knob. The beds were covered with bright patchwork quilts."

Owners of Hotel Flagler began with W.H. Lavington and W.L. Price who sold it in 1916 to H.B. Blancken. Mr. Blancken who sold the property to Phillip P. Strohmeyer in 1918. N.J. Wheeler operated the hotel about this time, Mr. Strohmeyer then sold it to Gustin Moyot. Mrs. Gus Moyot is recorded as proprietor. In 1920, it was sold to Edgar S. Perrine who operated it under the name of Hotel Perrine. In 1921, Mr. Perrine sold the Hotel



FLAGLER MAIN AVENUE, about 1915. Straub Lumber and Hardware is left of the Hotel. Seal Hall is the large building on the right.

to Bert Slavens of Garden City, Kansas. Slavens apparently sold to August Kalisch who sold very soon to E.L. Thompson. A Flagler News item in 1928 lists Mrs. J.W. Ellis as proprietor, offering a "Special Chicken Dinner--Sunday" for 40 cents. Little information of operation of the hotel was found in 1929, and early 1930s. Apparently, competition from Watters Hotel and others had an influence on business. One item in 1929, mentioned a Ladies Club using the dining facilities in a fund raising venture. It would appear that the property reverted then to W.H. Lavington who sold the Hotel to Dr. W.L. McBride in July, 1937.

Although it meant relocating in another town, a desire to establish a large hospital in the area, compelled Dr. W.L. McBride to purchase this building on July 13, 1937. The red brick building was structurally sound and an extensive remodeling was begun. Apparently this remodeling started with a new septic tank and some painting. Dr. McBride was meticulous in keeping track of most things, his record reveals he paid William H. Pelser \$5.00 for 20 hours of work at 25 cents per hour and Harvey Vieths was paid a similar amount. Hamer Shaw drew \$15.00 for his first check. A stucco coat was placed on the exterior of the building, tinted a light buff color. William A. Stone did this work. It might be interesting to add names of many who provided service or assisted in various tasks on the building at this time. Listed were: A.M. Leaverton, S.J.



Pearson (both painters), Henry Langcamp, L.J. Frye, Pat McCart, Denver Limon Truck Line, O.M. Olson, Oscar Short, Ed Neider, J.W. Collier, T. Guard (probably advertising or material), Harry Wylie, R.S. Bryan, Leach Hardware, White Hardware, Chas. E. Blair, Byron Miller (dray), Miller Electric Wiring, Colorado Lumber and Coal, E.J. White (shrubs) and Chas. Stager. Although the amount might sound rather small in today's world, it was large in the 1930's and a welcome income for many of the community. Dr. McBride spent a great deal of money, building his hospital (by 1930 standards)

FLAGLER HOSPITAL as it appeared in 1937 when re-construction was complete.

at a time when finances were very short. This venture required a great amount of faith and risk. Total outlay for the hospital, including equipment added later was more than \$22,000.00.

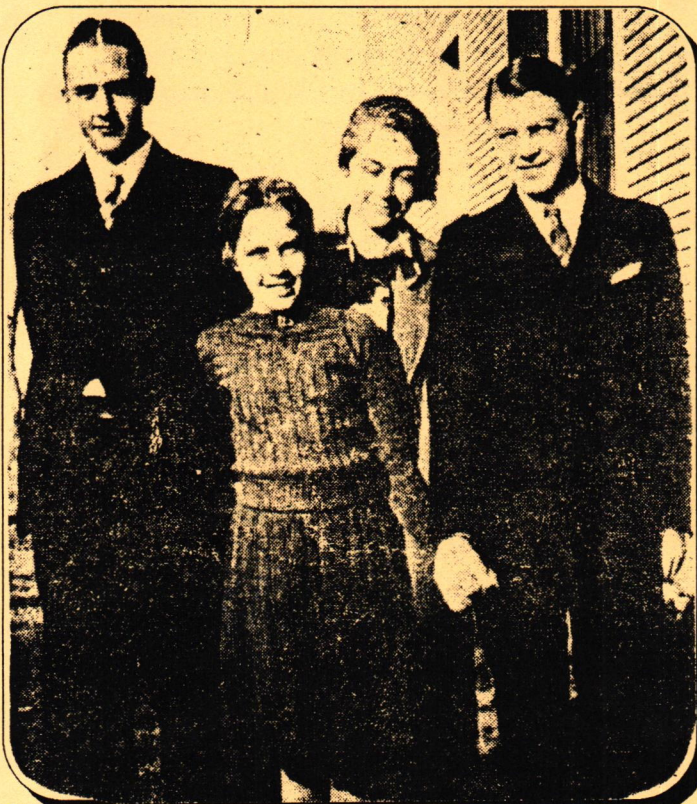
Changes made to the Hotel Flagler building amounted to: a complete stucco coat over the red brick exterior, a new concrete porch with entrance from the south side rather than front. A new porch was added to the rear enclosing rear and basement entrances. A new automatic hot water heating system was installed. An electric dumb-waiter serviced all three floors, making it easy to

rapidly transfer food from kitchen to upper floors. A piped-in oxygen system was eventually installed, along with changes to the operating room rendering it explosion proof.

Dr. McBride was meticulous in his record keeping and a small journal records all expenditures along with names of many local people who performed each remodeling task. A copy exists in files of the Flagler Historical Society. It should be remembered that at this time in our country jobs of any kind were welcome. The activity of remodeling Hotel Flagler into a new hospital provided jobs for local people and was deeply welcomed. Another Tax Stamp, similar to those previously described and issued for the year, 1937, has an added notation: "Transferred 10-19-37, to Flagler Hospital, Flagler, Colorado." The stamp was originally addressed to Wm. L. McBride, M.D., Seibert, Colorado.

When the hospital moved to Flagler, Frank Vasecka and George Simons, Sr. were given, a second time, the task of moving the X-Ray machine. Afterward, Frank said, "I just wasn't sure a few times, especially on that stairway to the second floor." George said, "Neither was I, just think what might have happened if that stairs had given away, we might have had our hands full!"

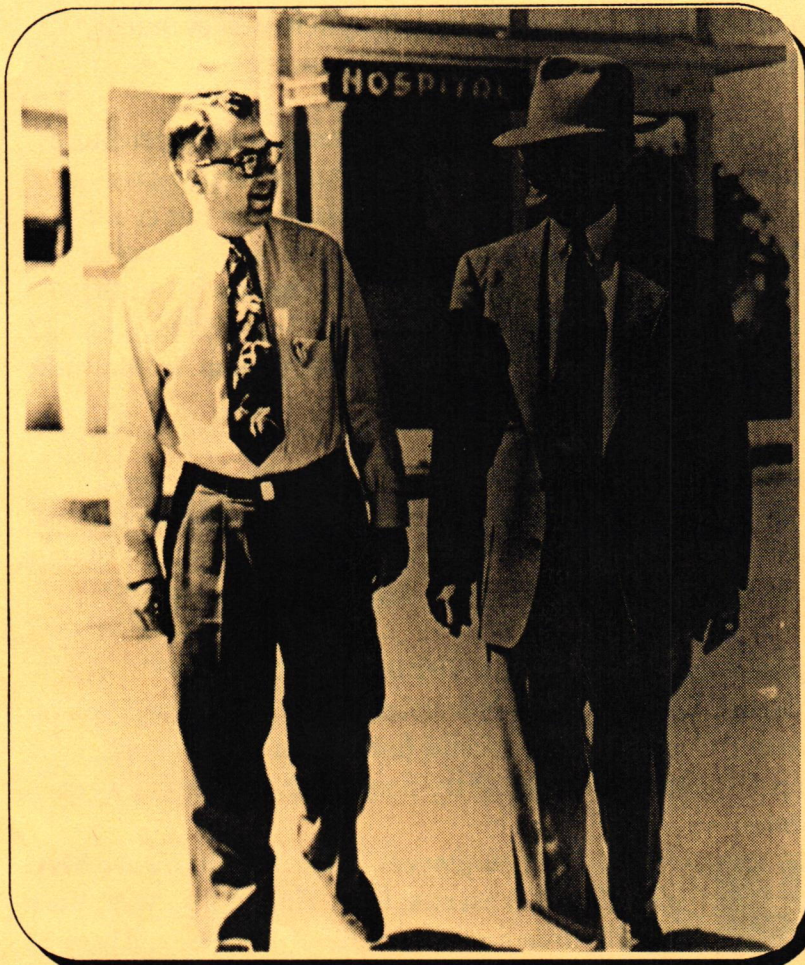
The first patient in the new hospital was Mrs. Earnest Miller on October 17, 1937. The first baby born here was William Sigurd Olson, born on November 6, 1937. He was a son of Mr. and Mrs. Sigurd Olson of Kit Carson, Colorado. The second baby born was Robert Elliston, born Nov. 14, 1937. During all years of existence of the hospital, 2,100 babies were born and there were 9,023 admissions.



STRAUB FAMILY in earlier years. Left to Right: Douglas, Meredith Zetah, and John. This photograph was taken about

First employees at the hospital were Mrs. Frank Vasecka, Mrs. Herb Ellis, Mrs. Vern Jensen and Mrs. Lillian Einspahr. There were originally five employees eventually averaging 13. Through following years a large number of people worked for the hospital in a variety of tasks. The dream of such a special hospital became a reality for Dr. McBride. Along with realization of a dream, came new but conquered problems ranging from medical to financial. Shortly after the hospital became a reality, we were involved in a second world war and very soon there were shortages of all kinds, especially in the medical area.

John C. Straub, step son of Dr. McBride who joined the hospital staff as doctor, grew up in Flagler, graduating from Flagler High School. His father, J.C. Straub, postmaster, was fatally injured at Crystal Springs in May, 1929. His mother, Zetah Straub, was appointed postmaster and John, being oldest of three children, along with Douglas and



Dr. John C. Straub, M.D. & Dr. W.L. McBride, M.D. in front of Flagler Hospital.

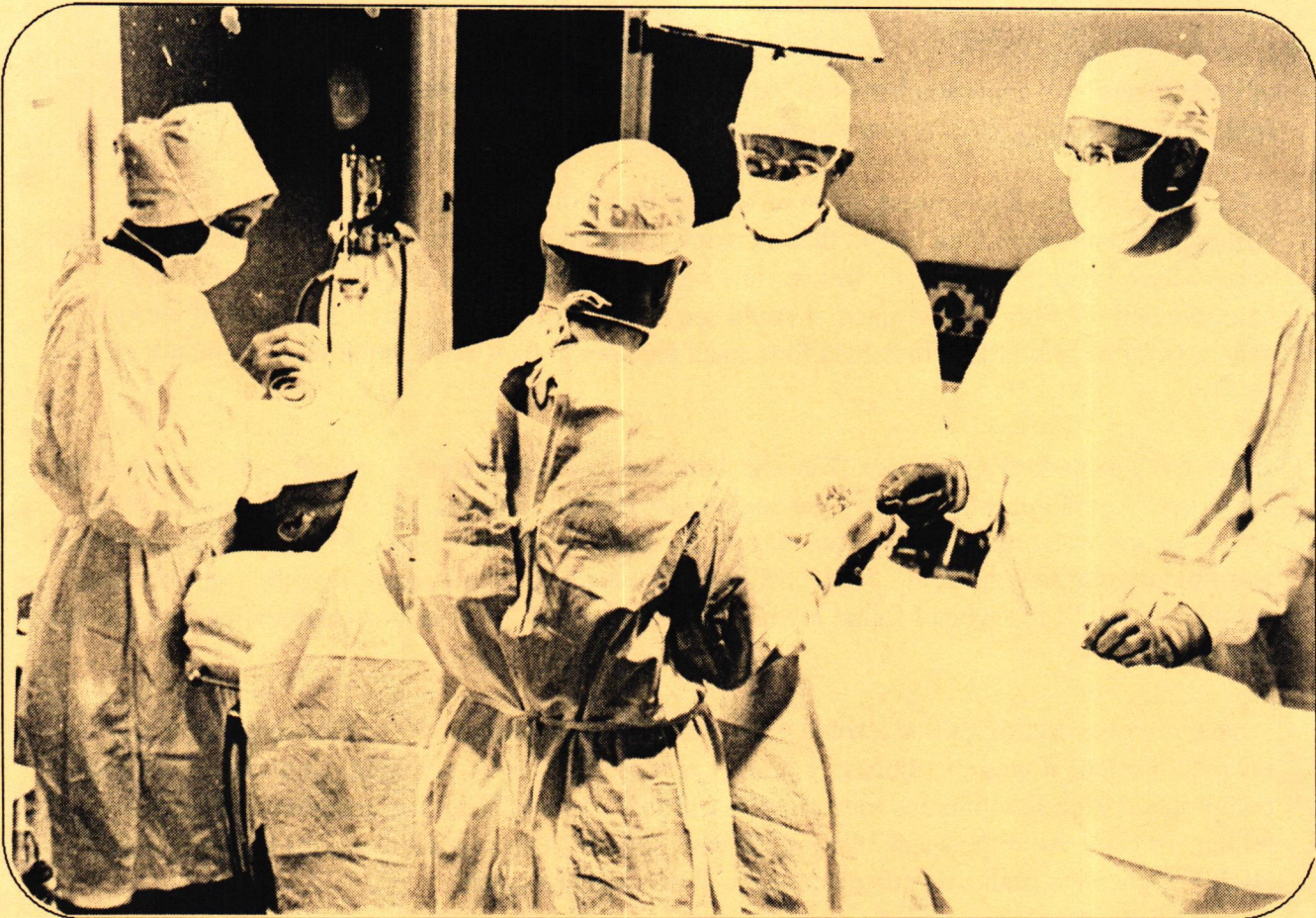
Meredith, assumed duties of the home. After graduation from high school, he attended college at Central College at Fayette, Missouri. John graduated from Central College and was accepted at the University of Colorado Medical School in Denver. While attending the University, he met and married Marie Saunders on October 3, 1937. She was a registered nurse from Wyoming.

During World War II, Dr. John C. Straub served in the Army Medical Corps in Africa and Europe. When the war ended, he entered practice with his step-father, Dr. W.L. McBride, taking over operation of the hospital. The hospital was a busy place, gaining a reputation as the best equipped hospital between Goodland, Kansas and Denver.

Douglas Straub joined the staff at Flagler Hospital in 1947,

serving as administrator. "Doug" had worked for Colorado General Hospital in Denver and Western Pacific Hospital in California. He was drafted into the US Army and saw duty on several islands of the Pacific. Douglas wrote an autobiography including his military experiences. A copy is in the files of the Flagler Historical Society. When returning from Leyte, he was stricken with polio and recuperated in an army hospital in San Francisco, California.

Douglas Straub was very welcome at Flagler Hospital where he took care of countless duties found around the hospital. His expertise added greatly to the smoother operation of the hospital. With the addition of Douglas a "family operating team" was formed with Drs. McBride and Straub, Mrs. McBride as anesthetist, Mrs. Marie Straub as nurse and Douglas who was proficient in operating room technique, as scrub nurse. This team gained national recognition for speed and proficiency and is shown on the following page.



Flagler Hospital "Family Operating Team."

Flagler Air Tragedy of 1951

It was on September 15, 1951, the entire medical team and staff met a supreme test.

In lieu of a rodeo, Flagler chose to sponsor an air show at the Flagler Fall Festival, 1951. After main street events and a barbecue at noon, a large crowd gathered at the Flagler Airport. Late arrival of a sail plane slowed schedule of the show.

A first indication of an air show began with the arrival of the sail plane. This writer remembers a dive it made toward the crowd, a rather frightening scream of air as it pulled out of the dive and continued on southward. My thought was not of contentment with such a maneuver, but there seemed no problem. There are many memories of the terrible accident, and some are yet untold. "Bill" Barker of the Denver Post had one which is recorded.

There remains a memory of my own. I had been visiting with my parents a couple dozen feet south of the windsock. With them were my wife and two children, one a tiny baby. I became interested in activities near the speaker's stand and left my family to investigate. After a short conversation there, a plane flashed into view, too low to the ground, and too close to the first row

of parked cars. Its approach had been hidden from me by the hangar. Sounds of rushing air, splitting and crashing noises, moaning sounds, accompanied my turning to look.

As if captured by slow motion, I couldn't comprehend or believe a terrible scene before me. Afflicted with a suffocating fear in that moment, I looked north to a vicinity of the windsock. The place where I had left my family was terribly near destruction and carnage! I made my way, carefully and fearfully to that place. I could see no member of my family! As I looked west, I saw my mother and father, they held four small children in their arms, none were members of my family.

Our car was parked a row back from the front and as I approached I noticed a crease across its top, I later found this was made by the engine as it hurtled to earth. Near it lay the pilot's body. Inside the car was one of my children was nearly asleep in the back seat. My very frightened wife was holding our baby in front. Somehow, we had been spared! I cannot describe the "lifting of pending horror" I felt when I found my family alive and well, or an almost suffocating remorse for others about me.

An unusual sensation of this terrible moment of life was a near silence of those many, many people. Perhaps it was a numbness, a feeling which may have been shared. It was too much to comprehend for a few minutes following this terrible tragedy. The first conscious sound I remember came from the speaker stand, "Please don't light any cigarettes, don't start any cars. High test gasoline is all over the place and will explode and burn!"

My parents had seen the plane and instinctively knew something was wrong, it headed directly toward them. In a split second before that plane crashed into everyone, they took into their arms, all kids they could carry and ran west toward the runway. I have always marveled at their actions in that short moment!

William Barker said in the Denver Post: "The corner of the hanger cut off my view, in that instant I heard a sound hard to define. Two cars crashing fenders would have been louder. My first thought, was 'Madsen's (Rocky Mountain Air Show sponsor) faked a bomb explosion behind the hangar. That feeble devise wouldn't fool anyone.'

"And then another sound came to me. A moan, issuing from many throats. Over that were weak sighs, a sighing tangle of words lost on the breeze.

"Perhaps 200 yards separated the audience from me. I ran, thinking, 'That plane fell! Beyond parked cars? In the entrance road beyond?'

"I stopped as the scene ravaged my senses. Cars crushed. Bodies....and parts of bodies. Fragments of wire, wood, cloth. Blood on staring faces. People milling like sheep around the fallen. Voices rising and falling oddly, without hysteria. Without panic. Stunned. Too stunned yet to believe what we all were seeing.

"I was numb. Everything receded from me. Two ideas fought for supremacy in my head: It's a story and My God, where are Lydia and the kids?"

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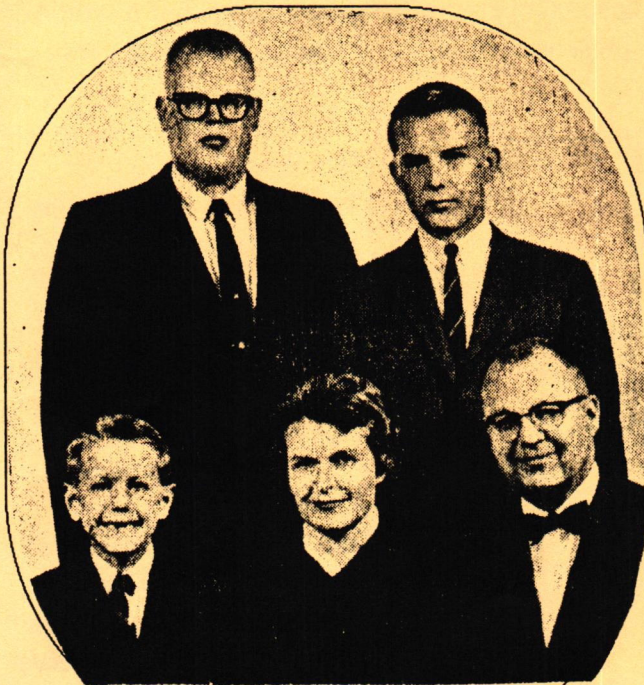
The medical team at Flagler Hospital was given a traumatic task in the next hours. Drs. McBride and John Straub, aided by Douglas and Marie Straub and regular nurses on duty bore shock of first casualties arriving on pickup and flat bed trucks, the ambulance sat at the airport with a side caved in. As minutes passed, nurses living here, who had served in the war, began to arrive, along with doctors from other towns in the area.

The twelve beds for adults and six for children of the hospital soon filled with patients. An unbelievable overflow of casualties were lying most everywhere. A few of those who could be moved were taken to other towns for treatment.

Large planes arrived from Denver and took a few patients to hospitals of that city. Speed and efficiency of those first critical minutes, becoming hours, availability of plasma, oxygen, penicillin, facilities of the hospital and its staff were invaluable to the injured. Of twenty casualties, seven were adults and thirteen were children. Dr. McBride had ushered nine of these children into the world.

Over seventeen, some records say twenty, were injured and treated at the Hospital. Some were moved to other places when there was no room for them. This day, Flagler Hospital fulfilled its mission, cancelling any debt of its inception.

Three very efficient telephone operators manned the local telephone office, handling hundreds of calls from neighboring towns and across the United States, many requesting information of relatives living here. They were the ones who handled a multitude of medical calls, requesting help from neighboring doctors and nurses, and of air lift to Denver.



Justin, Chris, Marie, Steve, and Dr. John. Photo taken in 1963.

Flagler Hospital History (Continued):

Many times Flagler Hospital played a vital roll in saving lives in countless emergencies, the air crash of 1951 was among the greatest medical feats performed there. Capability of the family operating team and its staff had gained national recognition, it was the best place to be when in need of medical care.

In 1951, at a mid-winter meeting of the American Medical Association, Dr. McBride was honored as medical doctor of the year. He was awarded a 50 year gold pin by the Colorado Medical Society at a meeting in Colorado Springs. Unfortunately Dr. McBride was unable to attend this meeting, being hospitalized at the time, Dr. John C. Straub accepted the award for him.

On November 30, 1952, The Denver Post ran a picture story titled, "Horse and Buggy Doctor Keeps Up With The Times." It was a tribute to Dr. McBride, Dr. Straub and their staff. It covered many facets of Dr. McBride's life and told of many successes of Flagler Hospital.

Dr. McBride's love of riding horses remained with him through the years and most will remember those he kept south of the present school facility. It was not uncommon to see him riding, tending and exercising his special horses.

After a brief retirement in the 1960's, Dr. McBride opened an office in the Flagler News building, continuing to see patients until the summer of 1962 when he closed his office.

Dr. John Straub continued operation of the hospital, providing for this area the best medical expertise available anywhere. He was a close friend of all, and certainly this must have caused him many heartaches when he was forced to reveal a critical diagnosis. Of greatest comfort to patients was a fact that no better care could be had anywhere else.

In these 1960's, operation of the hospital became worrisome when inflation raised costs of care and perhaps charges didn't increase as they should have at the hospital. Increased fees are worrisome in a closely knit and friendly community. Along with this were countless state regulations imposed on many small hospitals. These new regulations closed many hospitals in the state in due time. No doubt, there were areas in hospital operation needing change, but it would seem that loss of these institutions has influenced present costs and availability of medical care.



FLAGLER MUNICIPAL BUILDING & LIBRARY 1989

On April 21, 1963, Dr. Straub announced that the Flagler Hospital would close on May 15, 1963. A public meeting was held at the school gym to discuss the matter; however, efforts came too late and there seemed no financial way for the community to aid. Dr. John Straub accepted a call at Plains Medical Center at Limon, Colorado, where he continued to faithfully serve his old and many new



Douglas Straub and family.

position on the staff of the Hugo Hospital also, taking care of his patients at the Center in Limon.

The Hospital Building, formerly Hotel Flagler, stood vacant. It was rented during 1964 and 1965 by Ponderosa Industries. Dr. Straub donated the building to the Methodist Church at Limon, Co.

On October 4, 1967, lacking two weeks of being 82 years old, Dr. W.L. McBride passed away. He had been a patient for a few weeks at Hugo Hospital, Hugo, Colorado. He had devoted a lifetime to helping his fellow man. "Surviving are Mrs. McBride, his two children, Robert McBride of Henderson, Nevada and Mrs. Robert Campbell (*Annabelle*) of Portsmouth, Virginia; his step children, Dr. John Straub and Douglas Straub of Limon and Mrs. Loyd Moore Jr. of Pueblo; his only brother, John McBride of Laguna Beach, California and their families." (*Obit., October 12, 1967*).

The Town Of Flagler purchased the hospital building (*Formerly Hotel Flagler*) and received a Warrantee Deed on October 14, 1967.

Offices of the town were moved to the building in December, 1967. Remodeling for the Town Library reached completion in March, 1969 when the library was moved to the new municipal building. In November, 1970, an addition was added to the north side of the building to house the jail including a radio system using matching funds from the Federal Government in its "crime control program."

In 1989, this old building sported a neat new coat of paint with special lettering on its porch front saying, "Flagler Municipal Building." The building served our community as a public center, housing Town Of Flagler offices, a very neat and efficient library, and including a room which still serves as a memorial to author, Hal Borland. The Borland Room houses artifacts and material which was written by him. Hal Borland grew up in the Town Of Flagler, receiving his education through High School here. Hal Borland remembered his boyhood town of Flagler in one of his books and in several published articles, one titled, "Home Town Makes Good" in the New York Times Magazine. Another room in the first floor of the building houses a collection of history books assembled by another former resident, Donald Page.

NATIONAL SITE REGISTRATION AND RENOVATION

In 1991, Flagler Hospital Building, associated with creator of Flagler Hospital, Dr. W.L. McBride, was accepted into the National Register of Historic Places. First seeds of this possibility were sown in 1973, with little activity until about 1984. Activity increased in 1987 when Vivienne Williams carefully researched history of the building. John Valentine and Sylvia Gillin of RC & D gave assistance with forms and procedure. During, and after 1988, Centennial Year for the Town of Flagler, earnestness of this effort increased and Lyle Stone joined the team. After failures to nominate the building as a Hotel, and as an early Hospital, Flagler Hospital, with association of the man who introduced antiseptic surgery and improved medical care to our area, the structure was accepted. It was the expertise of Barbara Suddler of Colorado Historical Society which put the team again on track.

A picture of the present building in 1995 would appear much as the remodeled hospital did in 1937. In order to utilize the upper floor as a public area, access to it entailed an elevator, a device so badly needed during hospital operation. Modern codes dictated this added modification.

Renovation of Flagler Hospital Building required many structural activities including roof supporting beams, roof rafter additions, roof repair, foundation and earth berm reinforcement, basement entry reinforcement, exterior wall repair, among others. Included was replacement of the old boiler in the heating system, along with controlling devices. Radiators in rooms were retained to keep integrity of the building, and strangely, we are told, are nearly as efficient as modern devices. Window glass in the building was replaced with a double pane variety to improve heat efficiency of the building. Interior walls were repaired, along with trim, window frames, and doors. Doors were widened for disabled access to selected areas. An elevator shaft was constructed at the rear center of the building, and an elevator installed.

Carpet was laid in the surgery and X-Ray rooms along with stairways and hall. Exterior and interiors of the building have received new coats of paint. Railings for stairways and front porch have been renovated or reconstructed, appearing much as they did in 1937. For cosmetic reasons, the rear stairway has a new railing. Color choice for upper rooms is off-white, allowing for color accents to remind visitors of original color.

New uses for the upper floor include at this time, a Children's Library occupying the old X-Ray and Surgery rooms. The nursery area will be utilized as a place for some hospital artifacts, along with a list of most of the more than 2100 babies who began their lives near and in that room. The nurses area, laboratory, drug and supply area will be used to display as many hospital oriented artifacts as is possible. One room is tentatively designated for community artifacts, one for Library Extension, and one for replication of a 1900's hotel room. Rooms north of the upper hall will serve as office space, storage, Sanitation District Office, and a place for Scouts to meet. Artifacts of special nature are scheduled to occupy the cabinet where linen and supplies were kept in the hall. A desk for registration of visitors will occupy the same area as a desk which served nurses years ago. The call bell system is still in place, as is the oxygen supply system. Located in the upper rest room is the original bed-pan sterilizer, which was a welcome addition to the hospital nurses years ago. Original lighting fixtures occupy their same space, and does the

original dumb-waiter standing in readiness. Certain features from hospital days remain in place including the lead-lining of the X-Ray room, its metal blind to eliminate light, the inspection of patient window in its wall, explosion proof fittings of the surgery room, among others.

Renovation was made possible through a grant from Impact Funds, a grant from the Colorado Historical Society gaming funds, and funds from the Town of Flagler. A number of private cash donations have allowed us to complete a project of which we are very proud. There have been many individual donations of labor and assistance, assuring us that our community is sincere in its effort to preserve our proud past, and provide civic resource to all who desire.

This record was written to honor and preserve information of people, to remember and record as much information as possible about happenings, long past, occurring in our once prairie land and to preserve information of a majestic old building which has served our community long and well in varied ways.

Assembled and written by Lyle W. Stone
Extensively research by Vivienne Williams
Edit and proof reading by Mary Ruth Teeter
Revised by its author in May, 1995
A Flagler Historical Society Project.

ADDENDUM

During research of prairie hospitals of our Great Plains Area, certain information was found in regard to medical development in this area. This information, being significant in support of statements made about the Seibert Emergency Hospital and Flagler Hospital, is included for preservation.

It is interesting to note that Thomas County, in which Colby, Kansas is situated, was void of hospitals in 1931. Dr. V.C. Eddy and son, Dr. Murray Eddy closed their facility this year since it was not a paying proposition. It was an economically depressed period and with the advent of Works Progress Administration an attempt to build a hospital at Colby was made in 1936. These hopes vanished with lack of WPA funds. In 1939 and 1940, drives for funds were made and construction on a new hospital was commenced in 1940. An open house was held during the Thomas County Free Fair and the hospital opened in September, 1941. Claude Schnellbacher was the first patient with Dr. V.C. Eddy his physician. The Roman Catholic Order of the Sisters of Agnes was put in charge of this Thomas County Hospital (*later called St. Thomas Hospital*). Mentioned in old records was a hospital located at Goodland, Kansas, established by the Methodist Church of that city. In 1976, plans were formulated to build another new hospital. Several legal battles were endured and in 1982, Citizens Medical Center was opened.

Mentioned in old records was a hospital located at Goodland, Kansas. It was established by the Methodist Church of that city. Initial contacts with the Methodist Commission of Northwest Kansas began February 16, 1921. In October, \$60,000 was agreed to be furnished by the commission pending \$40,000 raised locally. This amount was pledged by February, 1922.

Construction of a Nurses' Home began in March, 1922, with construction of the hospital in November. On June 7, 1923, dedication services were held at the Methodist Church. Rain had prevented having the ceremony at the steps of the new Goodland Methodist Hospital.

Dr. B.H. Rouse was appointed as house surgeon. Local physicians joining him on the staff were Drs. Beckner, Gulick, Smith, and McCullough. Mrs. John Starrett was the first Superintendent. Mr. & Mrs. Price were janitor and cook.

On February 10, 1929, the name of the hospital was changed to Boothroy Memorial Hospital to honor Mrs. Hulda Emma Boothroy. In 1967, the hospital name was again changed to Sherman County Boothroy Memorial Hospital. In 1968, plans to replace the hospital were made, a bond vote was successful in 1969, and work commenced on March 11, 1970. A dedication ceremony for Northwest Kansas Medical Center was held on March 11, 1972.

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