



# New York Methodist Hospital



Sharing Your Past,  
Caring for Your Future





## Message to our Community

In observance of New York Methodist Hospital's 125th anniversary this year, we have created a new written history of the Hospital. No New Yorkers are prouder of their heritage than Brooklynites and we hope that you will enjoy this retrospective view of an important Brooklyn institution and the community it serves.

At the same time that we are commemorating a century and a quarter of caring for Brooklyn, we are also celebrating the opening of our new patient care pavilion. The new building houses a significantly expanded Emergency Department, a new Pediatrics Unit, our Nuclear Medicine Division and several new inpatient floors with a large number of private patient rooms. The new space will allow us to enhance our cardiology program, add beds to our maternity service and neonatal intensive care unit and expand services in several other clinical areas. With great excitement, we look ahead to a future as Brooklyn's premier hospital.

Completion of such a substantial project during this banner year is a happy coincidence that highlights our enduring commitment to our mission: to provide excellent and compassionate care to the people of Brooklyn. With the continued hard work of the physicians, nurses, health professionals, support staff members, trustees and volunteers who serve our Hospital, we are confident that New York Methodist will be able to invite Brooklynites to celebrate many more significant anniversaries as we move through the 21st century.



Mark J. Mundy  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*



John E. Carrington  
*Chairman of the Board*

*With great excitement, we look ahead to a future as Brooklyn's premier hospital.*



# 1881 was a busy year in Brooklyn.



**H**igh above the East River, workmen and engineers inched closer to finishing the “new eighth wonder of the world,” the great bridge that would link New York City and Brooklyn, the nation’s first and third largest cities. Beneath the bridge, in the shipyards, foundries, refineries and warehouses of Greenpoint, Williamsburg and Red Hook, hammers rose and fell and machinery hummed, noisy testimony to the industry and commerce that made Brooklyn the fourth leading American manufacturing metropolis.

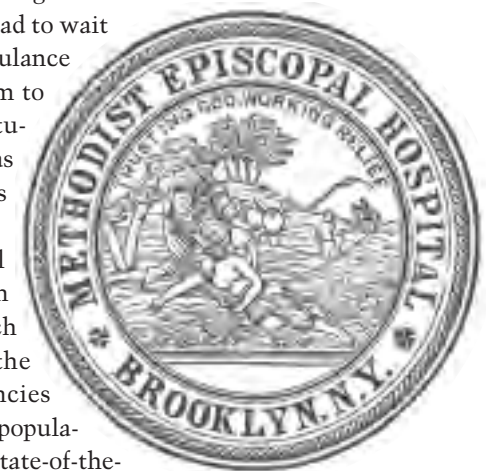
The city continued to grow by leaps and bounds, its population swollen by an ongoing influx of European emigrants who had more than doubled Kings County’s population in 20 years, to a total of nearly 600,000 by 1880. As businessmen and builders plotted the development of new residential districts to house this burgeoning population and planned new transit lines to move commuters between home and work, Brooklynites enjoyed themselves listening to concerts at their own Academy of Music, taking a dip in the ocean at Coney Island or cheering on their own Brooklyn Atlantics at the Union Base Ball Grounds in Williamsburg.

It was also a busy year for the Reverend James Monroe Buckley, editor of the influential Methodist Episcopal periodical *The Christian Advocate*. Buckley, formerly the pastor of a congregation on Hanson Place, had set his heart on founding a new hospital. The clergyman’s motivation for this ambitious task was a tragic accident of a sort that occurred all too frequently in the city’s crowded streets. Years earlier, when Buckley had been minister to a congregation in Stamford, Connecticut, his church organist had been struck by a runaway team of horses while visiting New York City. The wounded man had to wait an hour before an ambulance could be found to take him to an “unhomelike institution,” where his arm was amputated. Within hours he died.

Buckley was well aware that as Brooklyn continued to grow, such accidents, as well as the other health emergencies besetting an expanding population, required new and state-of-the-art hospital facilities. As a Methodist, he also felt that his denomination should play a role in implementing and sustaining the medical and social services that an increasingly urban America needed.

OPPOSITE: The Brooklyn Bridge, c.1883, from the Brooklyn side, drawn just after it opened. (*Harper’s Weekly*, May 26, 1883)

BELOW: The Hospital was founded as Methodist Episcopal Hospital; this early seal was used from the institution’s inception.



This badly faded, but much prized photograph was taken on September 21, 1881, at the ceremony to lay the Hospital's cornerstone, as Reverend James Monroe Buckley delivered an address.



**1881**

Methodist Episcopal Hospital is chartered (May 27); cornerstone laid for main building (September 21)

**1883**

Brooklyn Bridge opens to the public; a minor-league baseball team, the Brooklyn Baseball Association, is organized; later becomes the Brooklyn Dodgers. Seventh Avenue (Brooklyn) horsecar line begins operation.

In January 1881 he used the columns of *The Christian Advocate* to challenge his fellow Methodists to establish such a facility, asking them, "Is it not time that somewhere we built a hospital?"

Buckley's challenge was promptly answered by George Ingraham Seney, a prominent banker, art connoisseur, Methodist layman and Brooklyn resident. Seney pledged \$100,000 and several land lots to begin construction of the hospital pavilions, and to incorporate the institution and appoint a board of trustees. On May 27, 1881, the Methodist Episcopal Hospital was born when Buckley and his associates obtained a charter from the

State of New York. On September 21st of that year, they laid the cornerstone for the Hospital's main building. Construction commenced on the first three of what was supposed to be a grand total of nine hospital buildings.

## Early Years

Buckley and Seney may have given birth to a hospital, but its infancy proved frail and uncertain. Creating a hospital turned out to be an expensive business. In 1884, with the shells of the main building and two side pavilions nearing completion, George Seney's Metropolitan National Bank failed when the value of its investments in unreliable railroad securities plummeted. While Seney's contributions to the Hospital by this time totaled \$410,000, the beneficence of the institution's principal philanthropist now came to an abrupt halt as did work on the three hospital buildings. In order to give their project a fighting chance for survival, the Hospital's board of managers appointed the Reverend George P. Mains as financial agent. By soliciting contributions from Methodists all over the country, Mains was able to raise the \$100,000 that permitted builders to complete one facility, the 70-bed West Pavilion. On December 19, 1887, the Methodist Episcopal Hospital

## Founding Fathers

The Reverend James Monroe Buckley faced a daunting task on the day he entered George Ingraham Seney's office at the Metropolitan National Bank in Manhattan to ask for a donation to help educate a fatherless boy. Businesslike to the point of brusqueness, Seney was the very model of a successful Gilded Age banker for whom time was money. "Can you possibly give me two minutes?" the minister asked the banker. As Buckley later recalled,

*He took out his watch and looked at me like a caged lion, and said: "I will give you three minutes," and then looked me in the face.*

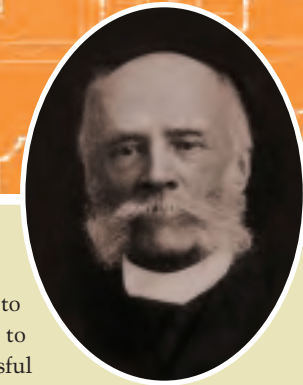
*I said "Need six men, twenty-five dollars a piece a year, for six years; have got all but one; Oliver Hoyt is one, William Hoyt another."*

*He said, "Put me down."*

That first encounter opened the door for the founding of Methodist Hospital. After Buckley called for such a hospital in January 1881, Seney offered him donations that eventually totaled \$410,000, bestowing his initial gift with the words, "Go build your hospital." So single handedly did the banker provide the seed money for the new institution that in its early years many knew it simply as "The Seney Hospital."

For the Reverend Buckley, matters of health had pressing personal as well as public significance. Tuberculosis had taken the lives of his father and two of his grandparents, and Buckley himself struggled with the disease throughout his life. Like many Protestant clerics of his day, he supported the temperance movement to prohibit alcohol consumption, and opposed theater-going as morally unhealthy. George Seney was a more worldly man, an ambitious businessman who worked himself up from a starting position as teller to become a leading banker of his day, a generous philanthropist to Wesleyan and Emory Universities, and a devotee of European and American painting whose acquisitions today grace the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and other museums. In funding the Hospital, Seney sought to honor the memory of his father, a Methodist minister, and he agreed with Buckley that the Hospital should be placed under the supervision of the Methodist Episcopal Church. But he also insisted that it be "a GENERAL HOSPITAL, open to Jew and Gentile, Protestant and Catholic, Heathen and Infidel, on the same terms."

The joint legacy to Brooklyn that Buckley and Seney together created in 1881 lives on in New York Methodist Hospital. As Buckley later noted wryly of their initial encounter, "if I had taken four minutes, I doubt if I would have a dollar for the boy or later for the hospital."



Reverend James Monroe Buckley, left, and George Ingraham Seney.

# The Accomplished Dr. Pilcher



In 1881, James Monroe Buckley invited his friend Lewis Stephen Pilcher, M.D., to organize the medical and surgical departments of a new hospital to be erected in Park Slope. The energetic 36-year-old surgeon jumped at the chance.

After serving in the Civil War and obtaining his medical degree from the University of Michigan, Pilcher opened a private surgical practice in Brooklyn. He viewed Buckley's invitation as an opportunity to create in Brooklyn a major hospital that would incorporate the latest innovations in surgical technique and medical administration.

Pilcher undertook his assignment at a moment in history when American hospitals, abetted by revolutions in the use of anesthesia and antisepsis, were attaining unprecedented importance as centers for surgical practice.

Fully grasping the opportunity before him, he embarked in 1884 on a three-month fact-finding tour of the hospitals of Germany, England and Scotland in order to lay the groundwork for Methodist as a state-of-the-art surgical and medical center. His meetings with European innovators such as Joseph Lister inspired Pilcher to envision the Park Slope hospital as an institution that would adhere to the most modern scientific methods in the training, medical practice and administrative organization of doctors, surgeons and nurses.

His involvement in planning the new hospital extended to his designing much of the actual physical plant of operating rooms and patient wards so as to embody what he had learned in Europe. When the hospital opened in 1887, Pilcher brought his vision to fruition by serving as president of its medical board and as attending surgeon, persisting in his work for 20 years and devoting himself to the goal of helping the institution overcome its early financial and spatial constraints.

During his years at Methodist (where two of his sons assisted him as interns and then as surgeons), Pilcher gained fame as one of the nation's leading surgeons and its preeminent surgical journalist. He made important contributions to surgical knowledge in the fields of wound treatment, intestinal surgery and tracheotomy for the treatment of diphtheria. In 1884 he founded the *Annals of Surgery*, the first journal in the English language devoted exclusively to surgery, which became a crucial medium for the dissemination of surgical knowledge on both sides of the Atlantic. Pilcher served as its editor for half a century, retiring from the *Annals* at the age of 89.

A tireless worker for more than two decades after he left Methodist Hospital, Pilcher did not forget his accomplishments on Sixth Street, nor his critical role in bringing the hospital into being. "During twenty-six of the years of my life which included the period of greatest and most fruitful activity," he observed in 1925, "I gave this institution the first place in my thoughts and energies."



Lewis Stephen Pilcher, M.D., toured European hospitals to bring the latest innovations in medical and surgical techniques to Park Slope.

admitted its first patient, followed by five more before the end of the year.

In its first year of operation, the Hospital's medical faculty numbered 16: two attending surgeons (including Lewis S. Pilcher, M.D., president of the Hospital's Medical Board), two attending physicians, four assistants, two consulting physicians, two consulting surgeons, one pathologist and a house staff of three additional doctors. The Hospital also attracted a small support staff of "internes," new doctors in need of post-graduate training, who among their other duties were responsible for examining and recommending admission of new patients.

With the Main Building unfinished due to lack of funds, the West Pavilion quickly proved to be cramped quarters for all the activities taking place there. Surgeons operated on patients in an attic hallway on the West Pavilion's fourth floor. As one doctor remembered, "The chimney piece served to hang our irrigating apparatus upon; the fireplace served as a receptacle for the soiled clothes hamper; and the walls were painted white in order to get some approach to that purity and cleanliness so necessary for operating room work. Whenever a splint was needed, an attendant would dive through the trap door into the dark garret of the West Pavilion and bring it forth."



**1887**  
Methodist Episcopal Hospital admits its first patient (December 19). Pratt Institute is founded.

**1888**  
The Hospital opens its Training School for Nurses.



LEFT: An engraving of the Hospital, c. 1887, showing the original buildings on Sixth Street.



Four years later, the Hospital Superintendent's office was located in the basement, the matron was housed in a made-over elevator shaft and the kitchen and laundry "rumbled and smoked in the basement and annoyed visitors, private patients, officers and the occupants of our Children's Ward." Still, the staff held high ambitions for making the Hospital a center of medical care and education for Brooklyn and beyond. In 1888 the Hospital opened its Training School for Nurses, which immediately proved to be a highly effective educational program as well as a source of nursing support for the doctors. The Children's Ward, opened in 1889, inaugurated Methodist's commitment to pediatric care for Brooklyn's youngest residents.

## Crossroads for the City

In the late 19th century, hospitals were not yet the complex medical centers serving diverse populations that we recognize today. Traditionally, hospitals functioned as charitable institutions for the care of a city's poorest inhabitants. Doctors treated patients, usually for free or for a nominal fee, in barracks-like public wards that afforded no privacy. This had been true

when Brooklyn's first hospital, Kings County Hospital, was opened as an almshouse infirmary in 1831, and it remained so when Buckley and Seney created Methodist Episcopal 50 years later. If the poorest and often least hopeful cases — sick prisoners, the mentally ill, "vagrants" and the homeless — ended up in city-run public facilities like Kings County, private hospitals such as Methodist existed to serve the vast laboring population that philanthropists described as the "worthy poor." Thus Methodist initially served Brooklyn's working class immigrants and their American-born children. But the Hospital also linked their world (if briefly) to that of a different set of Brooklyn residents, the financially comfortable native-born men and women who administered the Hospital's affairs, provided its medical services and raised funds to keep it going. While Buckley and Seney may have located their hospital in Park Slope because land happened to be available there, their choice also put the Hospital strategically in a zone between these two social worlds.

A mere two blocks to the east lay the exclusive and privileged world of the "Gold Coast," the domain of wealthy merchants and professionals and their families whose townhouses faced Prospect

**1889**  
The Children's Ward opens.



**1891**  
Montauk Club opens in Park Slope.

LEFT: Doctors and nurses, c.1893, treated wounds, epilepsy, "hysteria," typhoid fever, opium and gas poisoning, and even performed corrective surgery for a veteran whose legs were amputated in the Civil War.

1893

Seventh Avenue  
horsecar line switches  
to electricity, runs as  
streetcar line until 1951.

1895

East Pavilion dispensary  
is opened as an  
outpatient clinic.

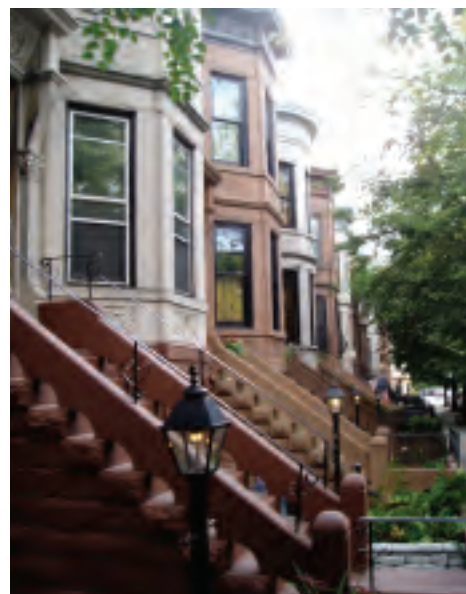


RIGHT: Elegant 19th century brownstones, originally the domain of wealthy merchants and professionals who helped support the Hospital, still characterize the Park Slope streetscape in the 21st century.

Park. From here and the adjoining neighborhoods of “brownstone Brooklyn,” Buckley and Seney recruited board members, doctors, volunteers and others interested in supporting the Hospital. Help came from devout Methodists, such as the middle-class ladies who formed Florence Nightingale Societies in several Brooklyn congregations to raise money for the Hospital. Ministers passed around the donation plate on Hospital Sundays, when they preached sermons to raise funds for what would eventually be called the “Mother Hospital of Methodism.” Aid also came from other affluent Brooklynites and New Yorkers, including members of the Havemeyer, Hoyt and Pratt families, who, regardless of their religious affiliation, viewed care of the sick and injured poor to be a responsibility of the “better classes.”

A few blocks to the southwest of the Hospital could be found a more mixed area of middle-class row houses interspersed with workers’ tenements, factories and small businesses. The Hospital served members of this community, and also catered to the crowded tenement districts stretching north and west across

Brooklyn, areas teeming with families who could never or only rarely afford care from physicians in private practice. Methodist’s central location, and the transit networks that brought patients to and from its door, made it an effective institution for reaching Brooklyn residents in medical jeopardy. Like the other electric trolley lines that increasingly crisscrossed the city, the Seventh Avenue Line provided easy access to the Hospital from throughout Kings County and, via the Brooklyn Bridge, for visitors from Manhattan. Just as critically, the Hospital’s horse-drawn ambulance, manned by “internes” and described as



The Hospital’s horse-drawn ambulance, described as “the most perfect vehicle of its kind ever constructed in America,” was originally staffed by interns.

### Directions to the Hospital

Persons coming to the Grand Central Station should take the elevated railroad (Third Avenue) to Brooklyn Bridge, and, crossing the Bridge to Brooklyn, take Seventh Avenue electric car to the Hospital.

Persons coming by Weehawken should cross to Franklin Street and thence to the Bridge (five minutes walk) by Chambers Street horse car, then proceed as above.

Persons coming by the Pennsylvania or Lehigh Valley Railroad can take the Annex ferry to Brooklyn, and then the Seventh Avenue car to the Hospital.

FROM The Methodist Episcopal Hospital Annual Report, 1902

“the most perfect vehicle of its kind ever constructed in America,” could go forth along Brooklyn’s wide avenues and narrower streets to bring back individuals stricken by sudden illness or injury in their homes, workplaces or in the streets. Eventually the Hospital would own at least two of these horse-drawn vehicles so as to enable interns to travel to simultaneous emergencies in different parts of Brooklyn.

In its earliest years the Hospital divided its services between the “medical” and the “surgical,” with the latter

encompassing the vast majority of its patient caseload. While some of this surgery was elective, much of it consisted of emergency cases rushed to the Hospital by its ambulance. As the Hospital’s first annual report observed in 1888, “the great strain which our intense modern life puts upon both body and mind” jeopardized the well-being of Brooklynites in the forms of industrial machinery, urban overcrowding and traffic, and “the multiplication of vices always associated with crowded populations,” including alcoholism and addiction.

# A Legacy of Skill and Compassion



In 1888, four pupils and four “probationers” became the first students of the new Methodist Episcopal Hospital’s Training School for Nurses. With hospitals sprouting up to meet the needs of an industrial and urban America (4,500 were founded between 1885 and 1915), Methodist’s board and administrators recognized that such a school would provide a vital training ground not only locally but nationally as well.

The Training School instituted a three-year curriculum, conducted by the Hospital faculty and a Supervisor of Nurses, in which students learned “the outlines of anatomy and physiology,” how to dress wounds, and how to apply “fomentations, poultices, cups and leeches.” They also learned the proper methods for disinfecting utensils, making beds, and for “preparing, cooking and serving delicacies to the sick.” The student nurses were required to attend frequent

lectures (eventually including two on gynecology delivered by Dr. Florence Leigh-Jones, one of the era’s rare female physicians), study manuals and textbooks, and assist the doctors in the wards, operating room, and outpatient department. While the Hospital lodged and fed the students, it defrayed the program’s costs by employing them as unpaid student nurses, it being understood that such work constituted a key element in their education. The school proved a success. In 1899, the Hospital could report that “the enthusiasm, intelligence, and excellent training of these nurses have been favorably acknowledged, and their services are much in demand elsewhere as well as in this city.”

In an era of rigid gender roles, nursing was one of the few professional fields open to middle-class women. Methodist presumed it would have an unmarried female student body when it instructed new pupils to bring with them “two dresses and one wrapper of gingham or some other wash material, made plainly; six large white aprons... plain underclothing, all marked with the owner’s name.” Applicants had to be between the ages of 21 and 35, signifying that many were making a choice between marriage and a career.

Within a decade, word of the school had spread widely, largely through the Methodist Church grapevine. Students in 1899 came from as far afield as Canada, Colorado and “Dakota.” That same year, the Hospital noted that of its 123 nursing graduates, 20 had married (four of them to doctors), 65 still resided in Brooklyn, while others were scattered from Los Angeles

The Methodist Episcopal Hospital’s Training School for Nurses, class of 1920. Some 2,700 nurses graduated from the school during its 83-year existence.

and Chicago to Ireland, Denmark, and a U.S. military post in the Philippines. Many remained active nurses, serving hospitals nationwide. Helen B. Riley, Class of 1892, who later married Dr. John Schapps, presumably assisted him with the patients he served in the town of Pony, Montana. The most famous graduate was Doris Schwartz, R.N., author of *Give Us To Go Blithely, My Fifty Years of Nursing*, and a pioneer in developing training programs for advanced nurse practitioners, especially in geriatrics and family medicine.

The Hospital came of age in the period when modern social work was born, and in 1911 the Hospital appointed Miss Lucy C. Catlin, R.N., as its first social service nurse. Miss Catlin admitted patients to the Hospital’s outpatient department, coordinated the Hospital’s work with other relief agencies, and became Methodist’s official “home visitor,” bringing services directly to patients in their homes. Caring for the social as well as medical needs of patients remained a key element of nursing (and nursing education) at Methodist over the decades to come, and lives on in the Hospital’s range of outreach services.

In 1971, due to the increased demand for nurses to have both B.A. and R.N. degrees, the Hospital closed its School of Nursing. Over the course of 83 years, 2,700 nurses had obtained their training and received their first professional hospital experience here. It was a legacy that left its mark, not only in Brooklyn but around the world, wherever Methodist-trained nurses served patients with skill and compassion.

Early case reports bear this out. Patients during the Hospital’s first year included a 17-year-old boy struck by a locomotive, a man in his 20s injured at sea by a falling mast, and a 55-year-old man hit by a derrick chain. In 1899, a fairly typical year, the Hospital’s ambulance made 1,376 calls, transporting 376 individuals with wounds, 186 who had sustained contusions, 120 with fractures and 76 suffering from alcoholism. Workplace hazards brought patients to the Hospital for both surgical and medical care. Injured construction workers were carried in frequently as they built Park Slope and adjoining districts. Doctors noted that workers in Brooklyn’s freight yards, foundries and sugar refineries suffered frequently from various pulmonary illnesses. As a community hospital, Methodist treated patients for a seemingly endless variety of ailments and afflictions, ranging from epilepsy, “hysteria,” typhoid fever, and opium and gas poisoning, to providing corrective surgery for a veteran whose legs had been amputated during the Civil War. It also became the principal health center for the young single women, many of them immigrants, who worked as live-in domestic servants, cooks and nannies for the moneyed families occupying Park Slope’s new brownstone townhouses.

## 1897

Steeplechase Park opens, inaugurating Coney Island’s heyday as an amusement center. Brooklyn Public Library is organized, and the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences (later renamed the Brooklyn Museum of Art) opens.

## 1898

The Hospital cares for Spanish-American War veterans. Greater New York City comes into being (January 1), absorbing the city of Brooklyn as one of its five boroughs.



### “Very Desirable Gifts”

*The question is frequently asked: What gifts aside from money are the most acceptable to the hospital? Among the most practical gifts are furnishings for beds.*

OUTFIT FOR ONE BED  
pillow case  
two sheets  
two blankets,  
all wool, white  
counterpane  
quilt  
two hand towels  
two table napkins  
two undervests for  
men or women  
two night garments  
for men or women

FROM The Methodist  
Episcopal Hospital Annual  
Report, 1908

In vowing to serve the “worthy and deserving poor,” Methodist opened its doors to the constituents of Brooklyn’s ethnic mosaic. In 1898, for example, out of a total of 1,381 patients, 951 had been born in the United States, although this number probably included many children of immigrants. The other 430 had been born in a total of 18 foreign countries, with Ireland, Germany, England, Sweden and Italy the leading contributors, representing the influx of northern and, increasingly, southern Europeans into Brooklyn. While the majority of patients adhered to one or another of the Protestant denominations (269 were Methodists), the single largest religious group was the 362 Roman Catholic patients, a natural development in a period when so many European Catholic emigrants found a home in Brooklyn. Thirty-one Jews and five who listed their religion as “none” were also present. In an era when racial exclusion and segregation in Brooklyn and New York City forced blacks into separate restaurants, theater galleries, schools and sports teams, the Hospital had from the start made a commitment to be “open to the sick of all lands and colors.” Methodist confirmed this commitment when in 1888 it admitted as one of its earliest patients a 16-year-old “colored girl” in need of skin grafts for burns, and its early patient rolls

also included a number of Brooklyn residents born in the West Indies, most likely members of the city’s Afro-Caribbean population.

## Financial Challenges

Keeping the Hospital financially healthy remained an uphill battle. While Methodist possessed the largest endowment fund of any Brooklyn hospital in 1890, its costs skyrocketed during the next decade, making it impossible to finish construction on its planned complex of buildings. One cause was the financial depression that threw millions of Americans out of work in the mid-1890s and hit Brooklyn as hard as any other community. As increasing numbers of men, women and children lost their jobs, the demand for free medical care shot up. In order to serve the swelling population of those desperate for treatment, the Hospital reduced the amount of time a given patient could occupy a bed, an average stay in the Hospital declined from almost 22 days in the early years to 18 days in 1899. To relieve the strain by providing some medical services on an outpatient basis, the Hospital in 1895 turned the first floor rooms of the East Pavilion

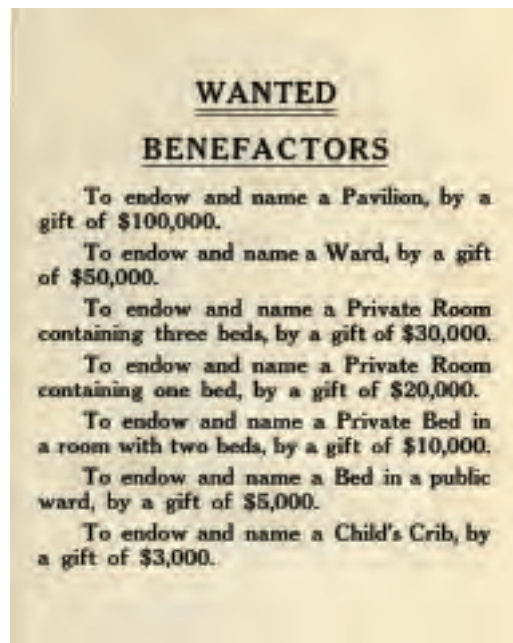


Three scenes from the Hospital dispensary, which provided free outpatient care to out-of-work Brooklynites and their families. Opened in response to the financial depression in the 1890s, the dispensary provided free treatment to some 16,000 visitors a year. It was originally funded by donations from former interns.



ABOVE: The Barnier Room was the first private room to be endowed for \$20,000. Elizabeth Barnier donated the money in honor of her parents.

RIGHT: Raising money was key to the Hospital's continued success. This "Benefactors Wanted" notice appeared in many early annual reports and other publications.



into a dispensary (an outpatient clinic), thus broadening the reach of an initial dispensary program established in 1889 but at that time limited only to former Hospital patients. The new dispensary, paid for out of donations by former Hospital interns, was soon providing free treatment to some 16,000 yearly visitors.

Despite financial pressures, Hospital board members and administrators remained committed to a vision of expanding the Hospital's services and facilities, a vision that proved costly to realize even as it promised a healthier future for Brooklyn. In 1888, the Hospital's annual report had noted that while Brooklyn contained a total of 920 hospital beds (70 of them at Methodist, the rest at seven other hospitals), the City of Brooklyn needed one hospital bed for every 500 residents—a ratio that required a city-wide total of 1,600 beds. The Hospital's Superintendent, the Reverend Dr. John Breckenridge, canvassed tirelessly to raise funds to permit Methodist to both survive and expand. In nationwide campaigns, Breckenridge successfully solicited funds from Methodist congregations and Conferences as far afield as Maine, Ohio and West Virginia. He appealed to donors to endow hospital beds at Methodist "in perpetuity" for \$5,000, or by the year at \$365 annually. By 1889, some 13 beds had been endowed

in perpetuity. Closer to home, Dr. Breckenridge delivered stirring fund-raising sermons to Methodist congregations throughout New York City and Long Island, while the ladies of the Brooklyn Florence Nightingale Societies delivered \$1,300 for the construction of an elevator in the West Pavilion.

From its inception, Methodist also sought to defray costs by adopting a policy that would soon become the norm for American hospitals: Requesting or requiring that patients pay for at least some of their care. In 1888 the Hospital announced that it was "necessary to limit the number of free patients, and to ask that those who can pay a part or the whole of the cost of their maintenance should do so." The Hospital's trustees noted that a patient who could pay for a bed in one of the Hospital's "open wards" should be contributing \$1.50 a day or \$10 weekly for his or her care. Meanwhile, a small number of private rooms would be available at a cost of between \$15 and \$30 weekly (this at a time when a skilled Brooklyn workman earned about \$15 for a 60-hour week, and working women rarely earned more than \$7 weekly).

The Hospital's goal was to attract a middle-class clientele whose payments would offset the costs of providing free or reduced-fee service to their less fortunate fellow Brooklynites. In an era when



The Hospital pharmacist, c. 1900. New scientific methods available at Methodist attracted doctors and their middle-class patients. Fees collected from these patients helped to subsidize the free care given to those who couldn't afford it.

physicians and surgeons attended middle-class Americans in their homes or in private offices, most viewed hospitals as dens of contagion where the poor went to die. To change this perception, Methodist (and other hospitals) began to provide private rooms and special meals to paying patients, and offered admitting and operating privileges to Brooklyn doctors who brought their private patients to the Hospital. Methodist further attracted doctors and paying patients by providing bacteriological and surgical equipment in an era when the discoveries of Lister, Koch, Pasteur and Roentgen were transforming medicine, thus providing physicians with access to new knowledge and technologies they might not be able to



find or afford in private practice. The Hospital used this income to enable it to continue its “free work” for non-paying patients. As the trustees declared in 1888, “no one will ever be refused admission on account of inability to pay unless the resources of the Hospital have been exhausted.” Indeed, 20 years later, in 1908, approximately two-thirds of the Hospital’s services were still being provided to patients free of charge.

**T**he 20th century arrived two years early for Brooklyn. On January 1, 1898, Greater New York City officially came into being. Overnight, Brooklyn lost its identity as an autonomous city and became one of New York City’s five boroughs. With more than one million residents, Brooklyn automatically helped to transform Greater New York into the world’s second largest city (following London). The new era would prove eventful both for Brooklyn and for Methodist Hospital. For example, for the first (but not the last) time in its history, the Hospital provided care for American servicemen during and after one of the country’s wars. In the aftermath of American victory in Cuba in the Spanish-American War of 1898, the Hospital took in some 95

of the “boys in blue,” including 45 who had been evacuated to Camp Wyckoff on Long Island and then transported by trolley line to Park Slope. Although many were “burning with fevers which seemed beyond human control,” under the watchful care of the Hospital’s doctors and nurses, only one of the soldiers died. Meanwhile, Brooklyn’s citizens donated goods to make the veterans comfortable. A Miss MacBennet, for example, collected “under clothing, stationery, postage stamps, ice cream and delicacies” for distribution among the recuperating soldiers.

The new century also ushered in a period of renewed building and expansion for the Hospital. A surgical pavilion was completed in 1900, the same year that electricity replaced gaslight in some of the Hospital’s facilities. In 1902 philanthropist William A. Halls, Jr. offered to share the cost of completing the long-awaited Main Building and West Pavilion if the Hospital raised funds for the purpose. As a result, in December 1906 the Hospital was able to dedicate and open the Halls Administrative Building. By then, the Hospital had opened an Obstetrics Department, which immediately became one of the busiest and most popular services. By 1907, the Hospital’s original 70 beds had grown to 200.



**1900**  
The Hospital’s Surgical Pavilion is completed. Brooklyn’s population reaches 1,166,582, second only to Manhattan’s among the five boroughs.

**1903**  
The Williamsburg Bridge and Coney Island’s Luna Park open.

OPPOSITE: Doctors and nurses, c. 1919, hold newborns in the maternity ward nursery. Within a few decades, Methodist would become known as “The Baby Hospital,” because of its large number of births.

## 1906

Halls Administrative Building is completed.



## 1907

The Hospital now holds 200 patient beds (up from the original 70).

## 1908

The IRT subway links Brooklyn to Manhattan. About two thirds of the Hospital's services are still provided to patients free of charge.

## 1909

Manhattan Bridge opens, third bridge to connect Brooklyn and Manhattan.

The staff and trustees in 1912 could look back proudly on 25 years of service in which the Hospital had cared for a total of 42,879 inpatients, provided nearly \$1 million in free care and over 100,000 outpatient dispensary visits. Superintendent Abram S. Kavanagh noted in 1914 how a visitor who spent an hour in one of the Hospital's hallways had been "amazed" at the amount of activity he observed. The visitor "had seldom been in a place where so much was going on. The nurses

and orderlies on the floor; the attendings arriving, the friends of patients coming, messenger boys with flowers..." With Brooklyn's population surging toward two million, Methodist had every reason to remain a center of activity.

This new era was not without its growing pains. Tensions between the Hospital's house physicians and attending physicians (doctors in private practice who brought paying patients into the Hospital and enjoyed admitting and oper-



ating privileges) proved to be one such problem. Competition between the two groups for Hospital resources and privileges accounted for most of the friction. The Hospital implemented a partial resolution in 1915, when the administration agreed to reorganize its surgical service under two head surgeons. This change also reflected a new age in which American doctors were acquiring more control over day-to-day hospital operations. The Hospital's Medical Board, which consisted of its senior, attending, and consulting physicians and surgeons, gained the right to nominate their own representatives to the Hospital's Board of Trustees, and the power to nominate or reject candidates for positions on the attending staff. In earlier years, the lay Board of Managers had appointed all physicians.

As always, money matters lay at the heart of most of the Hospital's challenges. While in 1888 the average cost of a day's stay for a patient had been \$1.01, by 1917 it had risen to \$2.65. As costs climbed and New York City's private hospitals became increasingly reliant on funding from the municipal government to underwrite care, Methodist faced an official city formula that forbade payment for several categories of patient care and limited public subsidies to an amount half the actual cost of "charity" care. While private philanthropists and Brooklyn businesses (including the Abraham & Straus Department Store and the Ansonia Clock Company, whose employees presumably benefited from the Hospital's proximity) continued to offer financial gifts, the struggle of Methodist and other hospitals with the city for increased funding fore-

These naval ward patients were among the nearly 1,200 soldiers who sought treatment in 1918. The Hospital also cared for soldiers during the Spanish-American War and World War II.

OPPOSITE: Interns in 1918 — the first year the Hospital permitted female interns to join the program — pose in the operating room. The number of women physicians at Methodist continued to grow, especially during World War I and World War II, when military service called many young men away.

**1911**

Lucy N. Catlin becomes the Hospital's first "social service nurse," initiating the Hospital's social work department.

Brooklyn Botanic Garden opens.

**1912**

Methodist Episcopal Hospital celebrates its 25th anniversary.

**1913**

Ebbets Field opens as home stadium for the Brooklyn Dodgers.

**1916**

Polio epidemic strikes New York City.

**1917-18**

Hospital puts its facilities at federal disposal during World War I, and treats convalescing sailors; cares for patients during 1918 influenza pandemic.

shadowed a century's worth of battles over public reimbursement.

Patriotism overshadowed such matters in 1917, when, following American entry into World War I, the Hospital put its West Pavilion at the federal government's disposal. As doctors and interns volunteered or were drafted into military service and the Hospital became a collection point for clothing and supplies donated to the troops, Methodist faced a staff shortage. Fortunately, most of the 1,173 convalescing U.S. Navy seamen whom the Hospital served in 1918 were not in need of serious medical or surgical care, and thus did not overwhelm the staff's ability to serve them.

On the other hand, the influenza epidemic that struck Brooklyn that year, and which killed 20 million people worldwide, constituted a crisis. The Hospital had already faced one public health emergency when, in 1916, an outbreak of



infantile paralysis (poliomyelitis) swept the New York area. Ironically, however, the polio epidemic had actually reduced patronage at the Hospital's popular outpatient dispensary, as parents avoided congregating with their children in a setting where contagion might be rife. The flu epidemic, conversely, filled the Hospital to the point of overflowing. As flu victims occupied beds and cots in the Hospital's typhoid ward and even in makeshift areas of the Halls Building, 62 nurses also came down with the illness. In light of the city-wide emergency, the Hospital ultimately turned over its wards to the city for the care of flu-stricken public charity patients.

## Years of Growth and Challenge

The "roaring twenties" would witness new construction at the Hospital, including the erection of Service Buildings One and Two in 1927-28 and the breaking of ground for a new Nurses' Residence in 1929. By mid-decade, Methodist's total bed capacity had risen to 375. To reach the Hospital during emergencies,

Young boy in the Hospital garden during the infantile paralysis (polio) outbreak of 1916. Ironically, patronage at the Hospital declined because parents kept their children away from settings where they might be exposed.



One of two motorized ambulances, c.1920, used to transport ill and injured Brooklynites to Methodist. Funds to purchase the modern ambulances were donated by doctors and members of the Florence Nightengale Societies.

FAR RIGHT: Well-baby clinics, like this one c. 1937, contributed to the good health of Brooklyn's youngest residents.

Brooklyn residents could now rely on a General Motors ambulance (whose \$2,276 price tag had been met by funds donated by the doctors and Florence Nightingale Societies) that had replaced the much-used old horse-drawn vehicles. Eventually the Hospital would possess two motorized ambulances in order to make emergency calls. Perhaps most notable of the Hospital's new additions was the Maternity Building, completed in 1924 and known for several decades as the West Pavilion until 1997 when it was renamed the William C. Kirkwood Pavilion. (Mr. Kirkwood, a Hospital trustee for more than 20 years, serving as vice chairman from 1982 until his death

in 1997, was one of the first babies born in the Maternity Building.) Obstetrics had become one of the Hospital's "growth" fields. In the Maternity Building's first eight months, 863 babies were born, and the Hospital's doctors made news in 1925 when they delivered three sets of twins within 24 hours.

Rising costs continued to accompany Hospital growth. The average daily cost of providing for a patient had shot up to \$4.88 by 1925. It was in this period that the Hospital's fundraisers hit upon the idea of the Red Stocking Appeal, in which Brooklyn schoolchildren and church groups received cardboard folders shaped like Christmas stockings in which they

could insert ten dimes. Supplementing Methodist's regular Christmas fundraising drive, the Red Stocking Appeal quickly became a popular way for Brooklyn's young to raise money and awareness for their community hospital. The Red Stocking icon may be the earliest fundraising symbol in the country, predating the Easter Seal and March of Dimes campaigns.

The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 shattered the health as well as the dreams of countless New Yorkers. It also put tremendous pressure on the city's medical institutions to provide care while having to slash expenses and cope with diminished revenues. As the Hospital's private rooms for paying patients stood empty, Brooklyn's ill swamped its outpatient dispensary and its free wards. Methodist also took in overflow patients from beleaguered public hospitals, putting further pressure on its own strained resources. By 1932, the trustees mandated that all staff members whose salaries exceeded \$80 a month take a ten percent wage cut.

In 1935, some patients availed themselves of a new system of insured hospital payments, officially titled Group Hospitalization in Greater New York but popularly known as the "three-cents-a-day plan." Hospital Superintendent Chester C. Marshall promoted the program as an answer to the "demands for socialized



**1924**  
West Pavilion, used for Maternity Service opens (now the Kirkwood Pavilion); 863 babies born there in first 8 months. Congressional law curtails mass emigration from southern and eastern Europe, affecting Brooklyn's population.

**1927-28**  
Service Buildings One and Two open.

**1929**  
Stock market crash starts the Great Depression. Brooklyn's tallest building, the Williamsburgh Savings Bank Tower, is completed.

medicine" in an age of efforts to secure the health of all New Yorkers in the face of rising medical costs.

Despite the economic disaster of the Depression, the Hospital's staff continued to plan and innovate. In 1931, they affli-



Conceived in the early 1920s, the Red Stocking Appeal was a popular way for Methodist Church youth and Brooklyn school children to raise money for the Hospital. The Red Stocking icon is one of the country's first fundraising symbols, predating both the Easter Seal and March of Dime campaigns.



OPPOSITE: Nurses tend to Brooklyn's newest residents in the Hospital nursery. Methodist's reputation as "The Baby Hospital" continued to grow.

ated with Long Island College Hospital in order to receive undergraduate medical students for training. The Hospital's long-cherished dream to augment the West Pavilion became a reality with the opening of the new Buckley Pavilion in 1942.

The Hospital's denominational orientation remained a key feature of its identity. Board members and administrators still described patients, regardless of their religious beliefs, as "guests of the church." The Hospital provided vital services to Methodist clergymen struggling with the onslaught of the Depression. No case was more dramatic than that of the Reverend Lloyd W. Karschner, who in 1933 at age 75 hitchhiked from his home in Millville, Pennsylvania, to Brooklyn because he knew the doctors at the Hospital would perform the cataract surgery he needed but could not afford. The Hospital's affiliation also resulted in a name change. In 1939, as the three American branches of Methodism prepared to come together as the United Methodist Church, Methodist Episcopal Hospital officially became the Methodist Hospital of Brooklyn. The UMC and the Hospital have since replaced their corporate connection with a "traditional" relationship.

American entry into World War II in December, 1941 once again brought staff shortages as doctors, nurses and other

employees joined thousands of their fellow Brooklyn residents serving their country overseas or at home. But the war at least ended the bleak years of New York's Depression. With defense jobs opening up in the Navy Yard and in hundreds of local businesses, more Brooklynites now had money in their pockets to pay for needed medical care. Additionally, increasing numbers of them subscribed to one form or another of health insurance; by 1950, for example, 44 percent of Methodist's patients would have at least some of their hospital expenses paid by Blue Cross. This circumstance foreshadowed a new, postwar medical economy, one in which hospitals relied increasingly on the insurance benefits of patients in addition to philanthropy, public reimbursement and the private payments of well-to-do patients.

## A Borough and a Hospital in Transition

The postwar years were a bit like a ride on the Coney Island Cyclone for Brooklyn. As Dodger Jackie Robinson integrated major league baseball and postwar prosperity lifted the incomes and aspirations

### 1930

Brooklyn is the city's most populous borough, with 2,560,401 inhabitants.

### 1935

Group Hospitalization in Greater New York goes into effect, offering insurance to New Yorkers; forerunner of later health plans.

### 1939

Methodist Episcopal Hospital renamed The Methodist Hospital of Brooklyn.

### 1941

United States enters World War II (December 8); many Hospital staff members serve in Armed Forces. Belt Parkway opens.

**1942**

Buckley Pavilion is completed.

**1947**

Jackie Robinson starts his first season with the Dodgers, integrating Major League Baseball.

**1950**

44% of Hospital patients have at least part of their treatment covered by Blue Cross.

Brooklyn population peaks at 2,738,175.

Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel is completed.

of many borough residents, World War II and Korean War veterans and their wives created their own “baby boom” at Methodist Hospital. The Maternity Building had become one of the Hospital’s busiest. In 1952 the Division of Obstetrics and Gynecology reported that its staff had delivered 54,300 babies since the Maternity Pavilion had opened in 1924. New doors were opening at the Hospital; in the same era, the Division appointed its first female physician, Dr. Isabelle Seismann. Methodist was now known far and wide as “The Baby Hospital.”

The late 1950s, however, also brought less happy tidings. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, an institution for over a century, closed its doors in 1955, and two years later the borough’s beloved Dodgers

moved to Los Angeles. More critically, many of the factories, refineries and processing plants that had employed Brooklyn workers for decades began to desert the borough, sparking a protracted and sometimes painful reorientation of Brooklyn’s economy from manufacturing to service industries. While Park Slope, once celebrated for its elegant Gold Coast, remained home to a vital community, its residents coped with the loss of blue-collar jobs, the abandonment of buildings by tenants and landlords and other urban stresses. In response, the Hospital’s Social Service Department became an increasingly active agent in the local community. As early as 1911, Methodist had appointed Miss Lucy C. Catlin, R.N., as its “social service nurse and supply secretary.” Miss Catlin paid 45 visits to the homes of local families in need during her first year, arranging for visits to the Hospital’s outpatient department, coordinating needed services with other relief agencies, and even attending to the religious needs of some families. By the 1940s and 1950s, the Hospital’s Social Service Department was aiding patients seeking improved housing, coordinating care for patients with psychiatric and emotional problems, and obtaining the services of a teacher through the New York City Board of Education to instruct children hospitalized for extended stays.



There was no playing hooky from school, even for hospitalized children, beginning in the 1940s. Today, the NYC Department of Education operates P.S. 403 on the Pediatrics Unit.

The social identity of the borough was also changing in the postwar era. As the children and grandchildren of European immigrants moved to Manhattan or the suburbs, their places were filled by newcomers, mostly African Americans from the South, emigrants from the British West Indies, and Puerto Ricans, who joined already-established black and Latino communities in Brooklyn. These new immigrants enriched the borough with their cultural contributions and their aspirations, but poverty, racism and discrimination also accompanied their relocation to the urban North.

Methodist Hospital served Brooklyn’s people as these changes took place. Costs continued to escalate. While the average

length of stay was down to 10 days by 1953, the cost of a day’s care was now averaging \$21.77. Yet the Hospital forged ahead to adapt and expand its services for a changing Brooklyn. (In 1957, the Hospital noted that 86 percent of its patients lived in Brooklyn, with almost 40 percent being residents of Park Slope.) In 1958 a bequest from Mrs. Stanley H. Miner enabled the Hospital to replace the old Halls Administration Building with the Miner Pavilion, which today serves as a main entrance to the Hospital for patients undergoing ambulatory procedures.

The Hospital’s doctors enjoyed a widespread reputation for their skills. From its earliest years, the Hospital was known throughout Brooklyn and New

OPPOSITE: Well-baby clinics continued into the postwar baby boom.



1955

Brooklyn Daily Eagle newspaper closes after 114 years. Brooklyn Dodgers win World Series against the New York Yankees.

1956

Brooklyn's last trolleys cease running.

1957

Brooklyn Dodgers move to Los Angeles. New York Aquarium opens at Coney Island.

1958

Miner Pavilion replaces Halls Administration Building.

1960

Clinical Pastoral Education Program and Pastors Clinic inaugurated. Hospital treats Park Slope plane crash survivor Stephen Baltz (December 16-17).



York City for its highly effective surgery department. Methodist's doctors were also discerning diagnosticians. As early as 1896 for example, they concluded that one of the inpatients, a 30-year-old Scottish emigrant who worked in a Brooklyn ceramics factory, suffered from the neurological condition known as Tourette's Syndrome, this in an era before the syndrome was widely recognized.

Skill and dedication continued to characterize Methodist's medical staff in the second half of the 20th century. By 1963, the Hospital was the workplace of 141 full-time physicians and surgeons, a consulting staff of 36 and a courtesy staff of 36, over 400 full-time nurses, 170 student nurses, 52 interns and residents, 138 volunteers, and 885 other workers.

Meeting the spiritual needs of patients has been a priority since the Hospital first admitted patients. Today, chaplains are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the Department of Pastoral Care.

The spiritual needs of patients continued to be addressed with the establishment in 1960 of the Department of Pastoral Care's Clinical Pastoral Education Program. This tradition continues today and chaplains of many faiths are available around the clock to respond to patients' spiritual needs and, if requested, connect them to their faith traditions. The Pastors Clinic, also started in 1960 (later extended to include pastors' spouses as well), offers clergy a four-day retreat, during which they receive complimentary medical screenings and learn about the Hospital's traditions and mission.

The

Hospital initiated a number of innovative programs in the 1960s. In 1962, for instance, Methodist opened an acute adult psychiatric in-patient unit, the first in any voluntary hospital in Brooklyn. (The first inpatient geriatric psychiatric unit in Brooklyn was opened by NYM in 1983). A 1963 article by the Hospital's Robert A. Wilson, M.D., and Raimondo Brevetti, M.D., with Thelma A. Wilson, R.N., laid the earliest groundwork for hormone replacement therapy during menopause.

The following year the Bartone School of Radiography was founded as a two-year training program. Today it offers training in diagnostic radiography, computerized tomography and magnetic resonance imagery. Another of the Hospital's initiatives in this era, the School of Medical Technology, trains college seniors to work as medical laboratory technologists. These educational endeavors led to others: The School of Radiation Therapy Technology, which trains technologists in radiation technology (1989), the Nurse Leader Program, to train nurse technicians (1992); and the NYM Paramedic Program (2001).

Volunteerism was a part of the Hospital from its inception, but it wasn't until the 1960s that a formally organized

effort was undertaken. Today, more than 1,000 individuals – ranging in age from 16 to 90 – volunteer their time and expertise at NYM through the numerous opportunities offered by the Department of Educational and Volunteer Resources. During the next decade, the Auxiliary was founded as a service and fundraising organization for the Hospital. Its most significant source of funds is from the Hospital gift shop, which is operated by the group. Since its founding in 1978, the Auxiliary has raised nearly \$3 million dollars, which has been used to support Hospital programs, equipment, renovations and aesthetic additions.



1962

Hospital opens the first acute adult psychiatric inpatient unit in Brooklyn.

1964

Bartone School of Radiography established. Verrazano Narrows Bridge between Brooklyn and Staten Island is completed.

Students in the Bartone School of Radiography, c.1967. The school has graduated more than 450 students since it was established.

## A Day of Tragedy

Catastrophe came to Park Slope a little before 11 a.m. on Friday, December 16, 1960. That morning, a United Airlines DC-8 jet en route from Chicago to Idlewild (today's JFK) Airport collided with a TWA Super Constellation propeller plane over New York harbor. The wreckage of the jet plunged to earth at the intersection of Seventh Avenue and Sterling Place, killing five pedestrians as well as a man inside a church, and setting fire to over a dozen buildings. A total of 128 passengers and flight crew perished on board the two planes.

As firemen, police, and emergency workers rushed to the scene, they realized that one victim had miraculously been thrown clear of the wreckage onto a snow bank. Eleven-year-old Stephen Baltz had been traveling alone from Chicago to spend Christmas with relatives in Yonkers. Stephen proved to be the only survivor of the collision. Park Slope resident Dorothy M. Fletcher comforted Stephen as she and two policemen lifted him into a car. "We are taking you to Methodist Hospital," she told the boy. "That's good," he was able to reply, "because I am a Methodist."

Stephen was rushed to Methodist, intermittently conscious and concerned that his mother, who was waiting at the airport to meet him, would be worried. For the next twenty-four hours, Methodist's surgeons, staff, and nurses worked non-stop to save his life. Sheila Carolan, the Hospital's chief emergency service nurse, spent all of Friday night with Stephen, noting later that he was "bright and sunny and had a good sense of humor." People all over the country prayed for him, and the Hospital received hundreds of telegrams and phone calls expressing hope for the boy's recovery. But his internal burns and other

injuries were too severe. At 1 p.m. the following day, Stephen Baltz passed away in his sleep at Methodist Hospital, with his mother and father nearby.

As a token of appreciation for all that the Hospital had done, Stephen's father presented the Hospital with the still-blackened coins from his son's pocket, as the start of a fund for some project to help other children. Gifts flooded in from all over the country as well as overseas, as gestures of concern and tribute to Stephen Baltz's brave fight. Out of this fund, an intensive care unit was established in the Pediatrics Department so that other children might be helped. To this day, the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit serves the Hospital's community. The coins from Stephen's pocket remain a cherished and honored heirloom, and a reminder of Methodist's role in doing its all to try to save the one courageous survivor of a terrible day.

**Stephen Baltz, 11, the sole survivor of the plane crash, was found alive on a snow bank. He succumbed to his injuries the next day.**



**FAR RIGHT: The wreckage of the United Air Lines DC-8 on Seventh Avenue and Sterling Place, just blocks from the Hospital in Park Slope.**





In an era of frequent hospital consolidations and closings, a signal event occurred in 1970 when, after two years of close cooperation, the Carlton C. Peck Memorial Hospital in Crown Heights merged with Methodist Hospital.

Methodist remained the “Baby Hospital,” with 3,079 deliveries in 1963. Significantly, the humanitarian imperative that prompted Buckley and Seney to found the Hospital over 80 years earlier lived on in the fact that one-third of these births were “ward cases,” in which physicians gave their services without compensation. The Obstetrics and Gynecology Division introduced fetal monitoring in 1970-71, and instituted family-centered maternity services, with options for “rooming in” and for fathers to hold their newborn babies.

The institution remained proud of its identity as the “Mother Hospital of Methodism,” the very first of 78 United Methodist Church-affiliated hospitals in the United States. In 1970, the Hospital was designated a National Historic Landmark of the United Methodist Church. The plaque, displayed at the Hospital, reads, in part: “The First

Methodist was already known as “The Baby Hospital” when doctors and nurses delivered this newborn in 1963.

Methodist Hospital in the world established May 27, 1881 in the City of Brooklyn, NY, on this site.”

## A New Era

As New York City weathered a fiscal crisis and a widespread reputation for urban decay in the 1970s, Brooklyn was experiencing the first stirrings of a rebirth that would blossom fully in the decades to come. After 1965, revised federal immigration laws drew fresh generations of newcomers to New York City, many of whom settled in Brooklyn, where they reinvigorated old neighborhoods and community businesses. Migrants brought their languages, cuisines and traditions from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In the same years, Brooklyn’s economy, like that of Manhattan, underwent a reorientation to the service and information sectors. In Park Slope, young professionals recognized the charm and convenience of one of Brooklyn’s most distinguished neighborhoods and began moving in, changing the commercial and residential character of the district. While urban problems (including challenges to health, especially in poorer communities) did not disappear, Brooklyn was on an upswing. “New

### 1965

Revised federal immigration law paves way for new waves of emigrants to arrive from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe.

### 1966

Brooklyn Navy Yard closes; later reopened as industrial park as part of Brooklyn’s economic revival. Brooklyn Heights is designated as the city’s first historic district.

### 1969

West Indian/American Day Carnival moves to Brooklyn from Manhattan, symbolizing the growth of Brooklyn’s Afro-Caribbean population.

1970

Carlton C. Peck Memorial Hospital in Crown Heights merges with The Methodist Hospital.



1971

The Hospital's School of Nursing closes after training 2,700 nurses over 83 years.

1983

Eight-story New Pavilion (now Carrington Pavilion) opened. Hospital opens first inpatient geriatric psychiatric unit in Brooklyn.

Centenary of the Brooklyn Bridge is celebrated.



Brooklynites" from diverse backgrounds came to know the Hospital as employees and as patients.

In harmony with the borough's regained vitality, Methodist Hospital undertook a modernization program that renewed and enhanced the entire institution. The old Nurses' Residence building was transformed into a new East Pavilion to meet the need for more office space. The eight-story New Pavilion opened in 1983 with a state-of-the-art operating room suite, recovery rooms, an obstetrical suite, delivery rooms and nurseries, intensive care units, a blood bank and clinical laboratories. In 1997, the New Pavilion was renamed the John E. Carrington Pavilion to honor Dr. Carrington, a Methodist minister and trustee who joined the board in 1968 and has served as its chairman since 1979. The remaining years of the century witnessed the renovation of nearly every area in the five older buildings of the Hospital complex.

The 1980s, however, presented the Hospital with problems as well as opportunities. By the latter part of the decade, the Hospital faced financial strain from the large number of patients who were unable to pay for medical care. The AIDS crisis exacerbated poverty and the lack of adequate health insurance for many. The typical hospitalized patient was now

## What can a Hospital mean to a Community?

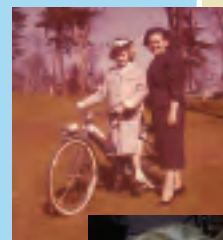
### A Sweet Story

In May 1892, a gentleman riding in Prospect Park was thrown from his horse and brought to this hospital with a fractured skull. He was the confidential clerk in a large sugar firm of Brooklyn. The proprietor came and said, "We cannot spare that man, and if you save his life you will never be sorry." It was a critical case, and for some days Life and Death sat on opposite scales, rising and falling at every change of pulse and respiration and temperature. At last surgical skill and vigilant nursing won the victory, and the man lived. The firm soon sent us a check for one thousand dollars in grateful recognition of services rendered.

We are pleasantly reminded of this patient again by a donation to the ladies of a barrel of sugar by the gentleman himself.

"It is sweet to be remembered."

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*The Hospital Journal*, May 1893



Maryann Feeney, with her mother, above, and today.



As a life-long resident of Park Slope, there have been several occasions when I and my family have been assisted by New York Methodist Hospital. We have consistently received good care. But one particular memory of my childhood in the early 1950s comes to mind.

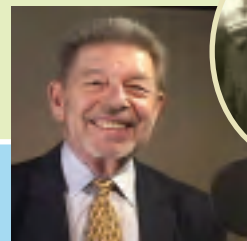
My mother had been hospitalized for a few days but to a five-year-old, it seemed to be forever. This was during a time when children were not allowed to visit, so my father arranged for my mother to be at the window of her room in the Buckley building. I remember standing on the corner of Sixth Street and Seventh Avenue and waving to my mother at the window, several floors above. I think of how happy it made me feel to this day each time I walk along Sixth Street.

Maryann McHugh Feeney

I have vivid memories of New York Methodist Hospital, or as we simply called it, The Methodist. I grew up five blocks from here. My mother, during that population boom after the war, worked here for four years in the maternity ward. At home she was working on a population explosion of her own; four of my brothers were born here in The Methodist. It was part of the small number of institutions that made up the neighborhood: the hospital, the police station, the school, the church. It was there forever and I hope will be here forever, because what it did for the people growing up in that era, it is doing for the people growing up in this era.

Pete Hamill

Pete Hamill today, and with his parents in 1936.



On May 12, 2006, our lives changed forever. That's when my husband Marvin was taken to New York Methodist with chest and back pains. The EKG done at our home by the paramedics was negative and we came to the Hospital just as a precaution—but Manish Sharma, M.D., Emergency Department physician, had an intuition that something was extremely wrong. After four hours of continuous testing, he was proved right: my husband had a life-threatening aortic aneurysm.

The doctors patiently explained everything, helping us through this very anxious time. This was not easy; I was continually crying.

By 6 a.m., my husband was being prepped for life-saving surgery. Always being one to want second opinions and knowledge of my doctors, I was

concerned. "Major surgery about to be performed. Don't know the doctors. No time for second opinions." But then I met Leonard Lee, M.D., cardiothoracic surgeon. He talked me through the procedure, calmly answering my many naïve questions. A few minutes later as I kissed my husband goodbye, I was confident he was in the right hands.

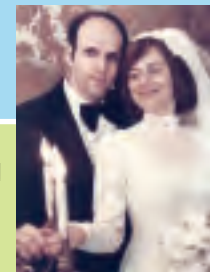
My husband's recovery is on track. The entire staff was terrific. They helped us realize how truly lucky we are to have a hospital like New York Methodist in our neighborhood.

Jan Rehder Lefkowitz



Jan and Marvin Lefkowitz

Harvey and Carole Polis



My wife and I were married on July 11, 1976 — a week after America's Bicentennial celebration. We were scheduled to leave for a Bermuda honeymoon the next day. Well, on our wedding night, Carole came down with terrible abdominal pains and a fever. Her doctor had her admitted to Methodist immediately, fearing appendicitis. It turned out to be some sort of infection, which was successfully treated at Methodist. Of course our honeymoon was delayed about a month and I took an awful ribbing from friends and family about what must have transpired on the wedding night that forced Carole into the Hospital!

Harvey Polis



significantly sicker than had previously been the case. The New York State government had instituted stringent regulations and complex reimbursement policies for hospital costs. Methodist, along with nearly every other hospital in the state, began moving into a deficit position. In 1988, the Hospital's president, Don A. Rece, noted that "our elected officials have assumed that a hospital can simply reduce costs when its financial situation needs to be improved... that assumption has proven to be both shortsighted and unwarranted."

Rece, who had been the Hospital's first administrator not to be an ordained Methodist minister, retired in 1990 after 24 years of service to the Hospital. As his successor, the Hospital's Board of Trustees chose Mark J. Mundy, who came with many years of experience in health care administration. Although the early 1990s continued to be a period of instability for health care providers, Methodist began, once again, to flourish. Working together on the assumption that hospitals "exist to serve their communities," the Methodist board and administration endeavored to anticipate the kinds of facilities and programs that the Hospital's community would need during the coming years.

The 1990s proved to be a busy and momentous decade for the Hospital. The

Hospital's Department of Radiation Oncology, a regional center for such treatment, founded a School of Radiation Therapy Technology and a stereotactic radiosurgery program. The Hospital also made a major commitment to new, minimally invasive surgery techniques. The first laparoscopic gall bladder removal and first laparoscopic hernia repair performed in Brooklyn took place at New York Methodist in 1991 and 1992, respectively. The first deep brain stimulation surgery (to control symptoms of Parkinson's disease) in New York City was performed at NYM. Additionally, the Hospital availed itself of new developments in diagnostic imaging technology such as ultrasound, computerized tomography (CT) scanning, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and nuclear medicine.

**A**nother pioneering program was the Nurse Leader Program, instituted in 1992, which over a 12-week course, trains nurse technicians to perform duties that require less training than that acquired by registered nurses, but that are nonetheless important to the patient's welfare. The program quickly became a model for institutions throughout the country.

## 1990

Brooklyn remains the city's most populous borough with 2,300,664; if it were a separate city, it would be the fourth-largest in the country; but 20% of its population lives below the federal poverty line.

## 1991

First laparoscopic gall bladder removal in Brooklyn performed at The Methodist Hospital.



OPPOSITE: When the Hospital introduced stereotactic radiosurgery — known as "brain surgery without a knife" — to Brooklyn in the 1990s, it revolutionized the treatment of some brain tumors.



## 1992

Hospital opens its first satellite ambulatory care center, now called the New York Methodist Hospital Family Health Center, on Flatbush Avenue.

First laparoscopic hernia repair in Brooklyn performed at The Methodist Hospital.

Nurse Leader Program initiated.

## 1993

The Hospital joins The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center to form the New York Hospital Care Network (now the NewYork-Presbyterian Healthcare System).

## 1994

The Methodist Hospital of Brooklyn becomes New York Methodist Hospital.

Recognizing the need to extend primary care services beyond the Park Slope campus, and embodying the tradition of community care exemplified in the Hospital's early years by its outpatient dispensary, the Hospital opened the New York Methodist Hospital Family Health Center at 210 Flatbush Avenue in 1992, the first of several such ambulatory care centers. With almost 20 percent of Brooklyn's families living below the federal poverty line in 1990, many of them without adequate health care or insurance, the Family Health Centers have brought vital medical services into communities where they are most needed. The Centers offer adult, pediatric, and obstetric care, psychological and nutritional counseling, and special outreach programs for the treatment of asthma, diabetes and nutritional problems. Today, NYM has four Family Health Centers spread across Brooklyn, as well as a large sponsored diagnostic and treatment center located in the Red Hook section. Together with the Hospital's on-campus outpatient clinics, these satellite facilities serve thousands of Brooklyn residents.

By the early 1990s, it was clear that market forces were driving health care providers into a new era, even without health care reform legislation. The Hospital's trustees secured the institution's future when they entered into an

alliance with The New York Hospital, now the NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, in 1993. The New York Hospital Care Network, now the New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System, was formed to ensure that people in the metropolitan area would continue to have access to high quality medical care in spite of a rapidly evolving health care system and escalating costs. Membership in the System and affiliation with the Weill Medical College of Cornell University also enhanced graduate medical education at Methodist, as residents in many of its ten training programs now benefited from shared NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell faculty members in several subspecialties. A new name accompanied membership in the System: in 1993 the medical complex centered on Sixth Street and Seventh Avenue officially became New York Methodist Hospital (NYM).

Just a few years later, NYM embarked on a major construction project, replacing an unsightly parking lot on Seventh Avenue with a modern medical pavilion, designed to blend with the neighborhood's 19th century architecture. Completed in 1998, the NYM Medical Office Pavilion features street level retail establishments, four floors of NYM faculty and private physician offices, rehabilitation facilities and a multi-level underground parking garage.

Prior to construction, the Hospital solicited neighborhood input and a number of modifications (the inclusion of observed bicycle spaces, the placement of a pedestrian entrance on Seventh Avenue and others) suggested by members of the community were incorporated into the final design.

New programs in place by the mid-1990s offered a wide array of innovative inpatient and outpatient services. Among them were a cardiac catheterization unit, a cardiopulmonary physiology laboratory, a chest pain emergency center, a chronic pain management center, a sleep disorders



## 1998

Four story Medical Office Pavilion and 500-car underground garage open on Seventh Avenue, between Fifth and Sixth Streets. The building, which also houses a Barnes & Noble superstore, reflects much community input in design and function.



## 2000

NYM opens The Birthing Center, which includes 12 labor-delivery-recovery rooms.

Brooklyn's population remains the largest among the city's boroughs, with 2,465,326 inhabitants. About 30% of New York City residents live in Brooklyn.

TOP LEFT: More than 5,000 babies were born at NYM in 2005.

LEFT: Breastfeeding support at NYM includes prenatal and postnatal classes, individual consultations with certified lactation consultants and support groups.



center, a reproductive endocrinology lab, a spine and arthritis center and a women's diagnostic center. The year 2000 saw the opening of new obstetrics facilities that included a mother-baby unit (post partum floor), an expanded Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and a birthing center with 12 labor-delivery-recovery rooms committed to a "family-centered birthing experience." Along with a state-of-the-art fertility center, these new facilities upheld NYM's proud reputation as the "The Baby Hospital," while extending women's health care through the latest technologies and therapies. In 2005, more than 5,000 babies were born at NYM.

## Toward the Future

The first years of the 21st century brought further expansion at New York Methodist Hospital, under the leadership of the president and CEO Mark J. Mundy. By 2004, the New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System had become one of the largest comprehensive networks of healthcare providers in the country, serving one of every five patients seen in the greater New York metropolitan area. New York Methodist Hospital continued to develop and offer a range of state-of-the-art med-

ical services, including advanced laparoscopic surgery, the latest version of deep brain stimulation (to treat Parkinson's Disease) and IMRT, one of the most advanced forms of radiation therapy against cancer tumors. Under the direction of Stanley Sherbell, M.D., executive vice president for medical affairs, the Hospital strengthened its medical residency programs and recruited many nationally recognized physicians.

One of the new century's most noteworthy events for the Hospital was the opening in April 2004 of the New York Methodist-Cornell Heart Center which brought to Brooklyn a patient-centered, state-of-the-art cardiac surgery center staffed with a top-rated surgical team from the Weill Cornell Medical Center. The new Center was developed after New York State selected NYM to create a comprehensive heart surgery program for the borough of Brooklyn. It is only the third such center in Brooklyn and was approved by the State following a highly competitive process.

After years of intensive planning, construction and the hiring of an exceptionally trained and talented staff, the Center opened with two cardiac surgery rooms, eight-bed cardiac intensive care unit, and patient and family waiting areas. A team of interventional cardiologists plays an integral role in the cardiac

### Infectious Diseases Treated at Methodist

#### 1902

Typhoid fever  
Paratyphoid fever  
Scarlet fever  
Malaria  
Influenza  
Tuberculosis

#### 2005

Tuberculosis  
Blood-borne illnesses (HIV, Hepatitis B & C)  
Meningitis  
Influenza  
Multi-drug resistant organisms:  
MSRA (Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus) and VRE (Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus)

OPPOSITE: The New York Methodist-Cornell Heart Center, opened in 2004, brought to Brooklyn a state-of-the-art cardiac surgery center staffed with a top-rated surgical team from the Weill Cornell Medical Center.



**2003**

Construction begins on new Infill Building.

**2004**

New York Methodist-Cornell Heart Center opens.

**2006**

NYM celebrates its 125th anniversary.

Although the Hospital has been in the same location for its entire existence, all of its original buildings have now been replaced. While NYM has long been Park's Slope's neighborhood Hospital, it now functions as a major regional medical center for the entire borough of Brooklyn.

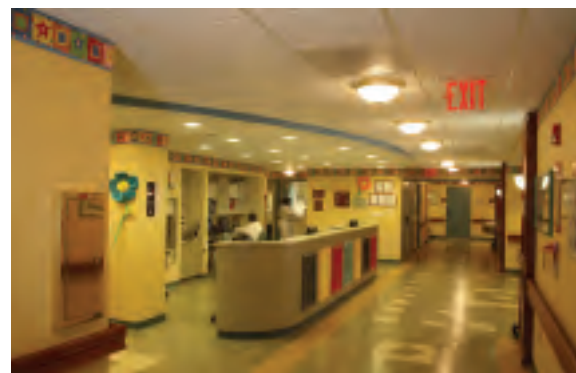
surgery program. These physicians specialize in advanced non-surgical procedures, including balloon angioplasty and stent placement. The opening of the New York Methodist-Cornell Heart Center also served to strengthen NYM's role as a borough-wide medical institution.

In 2003, construction began on a new building on the Hospital's Park Slope campus, to be completed in 2006, allowing for the expansion of the Cardiology Division, the Emergency Department, the Mother/Baby Unit, the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and the Pediatrics Unit, along with more than 100 new private inpatient rooms. Nicknamed the "Infill" building, the new construction literally filled in the space in-between and behind the Hospital's existing buildings.

Other construction projects were begun in 2005, including a new façade for the Kirkwood Pavilion and new entrances for the ambulatory care clinics and the Emergency Department.



TOP RIGHT: The new atrium lobby in the Carrington Pavilion.



RIGHT: The new bright, cheerful Pediatrics Unit.

# New York Methodist Hospital has come a long way in 125 years.



From the seed money that George Senev gave to James Monroe Buckley in 1881, New York Methodist has grown into a medical center with an annual budget exceeding \$475 million. The 70 beds it provided in the West Pavilion in 1887 have become more than 600 beds (including bassinets). Its original medical faculty of 16, with a support staff of a handful more, has turned into a total staff of nearly 3,000 fulltime or equivalent employees plus more than 1,000 attending physicians. From a total of six patients in 1887, NYM today treats more than 30,000 inpatients each year, and records nearly 100,000 outpatient clinic visits, approximately 60,000 visits to its Family Health Centers and about 65,000 Emergency Department visits. In the 1880s, an inpatient would spend an average of almost 22 days in one of the Hospital's beds; today, most spend less than a week.

For all its growth, NYM continues true to its original vision of serving the health needs of the people of Brooklyn. As in the 1880s, the Hospital serves native Brooklynites as well as people from all over the world who have come to Brooklyn seeking a better life. Growing up with Brooklyn, the Hospital has changed with the times to meet the constantly evolving needs and challenges of a city and a borough that have never stood still. New York Methodist Hospital faces a busy and dynamic future of dedication to the health of Brooklyn's people, a future consistent with its heritage of 125 years in their service. It is a fitting legacy for an institution founded to be "a general Hospital and open to the sick of all lands and colors and creeds" and one with a spirit "so liberal that the doors shall be thrown wide open to any human being that God Almighty permits to live anywhere on the face of his earth."

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**Lyn S. Hill**, Vice President  
for Communication  
and External Affairs

Editor: **Susan LaRosa**

Designer: **Melanie Roberts**

Historical Researcher & Writer:  
**Steven H. Jaffe, Ph.D.**

Photographers: **Vinnie Amesse,**  
**Doris Barnes, Hugh Crawford,**  
**David Grossman, Amelia**  
**Panico, Frank Ritter**

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**nym**  
NEW YORK METHODIST HOSPITAL

506 Sixth Street  
Brooklyn, New York  
11215

718.780.3000  
[www.nym.org](http://www.nym.org)

Member  
New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System  
Affiliate: Weill Medical College of Cornell University

