

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRD
ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

South Carolina State Hospital

FOR THE YEAR 1926

PRINTED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

FOR NURSES

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Parties for those engaged in the occupational department have been given on Thursday afternoons, and for those who are confined to bed entertainments with refreshments have been given on the wards. A radio has also afforded much pleasure.

During the summer months the patients had the pleasure of witnessing ball games, taking truck rides about the city and surrounding country and partaking of watermelon feasts. Many attended the circus parades while a number attended the performances accompanied by relatives or attendants.

Several hundred white and colored patients attended the State Fairs. These visits have become yearly events greatly enjoyed by the patients.

The annual Field Day was held on October 13th. Prizes were awarded winners in the various contests, refreshments were served and music was furnished by the hospital band.

A Hallowe'en party was given on October 30th.

The celebration of the Christmas season was begun early Christmas morning when nurses and white male attendants, accompanied by B. A. Gardner, Music director, and several members of the hospital orchestra, went from building to building singing carols. After a special dinner gifts were distributed from decorated trees in the various dining rooms which, together with the wards, were beautiful in their Yuletide decorations.

For the entertainment of the patients and employees members of the hospital corps have presented a pageant depicting "The History of Nursing," a mock wedding, and a play entitled "The Real Thing."

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

The patients have taken a great deal of interest in the religious services conducted every Sunday morning by the chaplain, Rev. J. C. Abney, who also is always available for those who are ill physically, and he conducts funeral services for those buried in the hospital cemetery.

Clergymen of the various denominations in the city have shown their interest in the patients by periodic visits.

IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS

The chief renovations and repairs which have been completed during the year include additions to the ice plant and cold storage, remodeling of the dairy sterilization plant at the dairy, installation

of overhead sprinklers in the laundry and the attics of the Taylor and Talley buildings, screening of wards, three double cabins for the accommodation of attendants at State Park, one cabin for a farm hand on the Moore farm, an additional room to the bakery for the purpose of storing flour, new concrete floors in three wards of the old building which were made necessary on account of decay and dilapidation, improvements in the plumbing and the installation of fixtures were also made necessary on account of the increased number of patients which had to be cared for in these quarters, wooden exits to the third ward Talley and fourth ward Taylor buildings were replaced by metal, fire-proof stairs. A cottage for an assistance physician is being erected and will soon be completed; the kitchen on ward 11 A, in which meals were heretofore prepared for special patients on the infirmary wards, was converted into a modern diet kitchen which now serves all the infirmary wards in the hospital with special diet, in addition to providing equipment for the instruction of dietetics in the training school for nurses. Considerable painting has been done during the year.

NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

As stated in previous reports the hospital continues to be greatly overcrowded, a condition that is becoming worse and worse each year. As a consequence the hospital has been unable to meet the demands made upon it and has found it necessary during the past year to refuse admission to 269 persons for whom application was made. The problem of overcrowding became so acute that the matter was taken up with your Board at its regular meeting on July 8, 1926, at which time the following resolution was passed:

Whereas the South Carolina State Hospital has become seriously overcrowded, the population today being 2,573, and the official maximum capacity after pressing into service all available space, including the basements, is 2,287, and

Whereas overcrowding to this extent retards and in some cases actually prevents recovery of patients, increases accidents and interferes with proper sanitation and treatment and jeopardizes their physical and mental welfare, and

Whereas adequate provision has not been made to relieve this condition and meet the demands for admission; therefore

Be it ordered
authority given
following resolution

1. Admit persons who benefit by dangerous at home and

2. Admit who are treatment

3. Juveniles in advance in each may decrease

4. Conditions in the hospital shall be as wide as possible

5. Of the Report of the Board of Directors

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Be it ordered by the Board of Regents now in session, acting under authority granted it by statute, that the superintendent enforce the following rules:

1. Admission shall be granted only to very urgent cases—young persons whose trouble is of recent origin and who offer hope of benefit by treatment being given preference—and to violent cases dangerous to themselves and others who cannot be safely cared for at home and are unable to pay for treatment in a private hospital.
2. Admission shall be denied to senile cases—that is, old persons who are harmless—and incurable cases who cannot be benefited by treatment.
3. Judges of Probate shall be required to send the Superintendent in advance of commitment both copies of paper completely filled out in each and every case proposed to be committed in order that he may determine if and when said applicant may be received.
4. Copy of this action shall be sent to every Judge of Probate in the State in order that he may have a clear understanding of conditions that make this action necessary and imperative, and copies shall be turned over to the press of the State so conditions may have as wide publicity as possible.
5. These rules shall continue in force until modified by the Board of Regents.

Ratified this the 8th day of July, 1926.

(Signed) ROBT. B. SCARBOROUGH,
Chairman.

A copy of the resolution was immediately mailed to all the judges of probate and almost without exception we have had their full cooperation in our efforts to prevent further overcrowding, but relief has not come and serious overcrowding still exists.

Let me again emphasize the fact that one not familiar with hospital practice and management can hardly realize what over-crowding means. Mere figures fail to convey the real meaning. Over-crowding tends to lessen, and in some cases actually prevents the recovery of the patients. When the day rooms and sleeping quarters are congested proper classification of the patients is impossible. Patients disturb each other and do not get the needed rest. They naturally

resent being jostled and annoyed by each other, and disturbing conflicts arise in spite of the watchfulness of the nurses and attendants. Accidents are more frequent, property is destroyed; sanitation and cleanliness are interfered with and it is extremely difficult to give the individual patients all the care they frequently need and to maintain the high standards of medical service for all who are committed for treatment. One may justly ask if the State has the right to commit persons to the hospital and jeopardize in any way their mental and physical health by overcrowding. This condition alone has placed a serious responsibility upon the authorities of the hospital, and over-crowding to the limit which has been reached has only been permitted in order to prevent the necessity of confining in the jails persons who should receive hospital treatment.

The chief function of the hospital is to afford a place where as many persons as possible may be cured, and in as short a time as possible. To fail to do this is unfair to the patients and is a waste which the tax payers have to bear. No other single factor militates so much against the recovery rate, or tends more to prolong the stay of patients in the hospital than over-crowding.

Aside from all questions of humanity, sentiment or even of justice it is economy for the State to provide proper equipment and facilities for the mentally sick. If the people generally could understand the evils of overcrowding, recognizing the fact that such conditions tend to condemn their fellowmen, perhaps their own loved ones, to a life of confinement, instead of giving them a chance to be restored to mental health, there is no question but that they would urge adequate and speedy provision by the General Assembly.

There is at this time urgent need for 600 additional beds, 300 to relieve the overcrowding that exists and 300 to take care of those who have sought admission and who are entitled to the benefits the hospital has to offer.

There is also urgent need for a nurses' home. In the employ of the hospital there are now 85 white women acting in the capacity of nurses and attendants. The nurses' home, which is a frame structure and a great fire hazard, can accommodate only 46. The rest of these women, who are on duty 12 hours out of the 24, are required to sleep in buildings where patients are cared for and many of them have rooms on wards occupied by patients. This is not fair to them nor is it fair to the hospital.

It is our duty to the nurses and attendants to safeguard in every way their health and during their recreational hours they should be

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free from the strain that must necessarily come from association with persons mentally sick.

It is earnestly hoped that this Legislature will be brought to the full realization of the needs of the hospital and that provision will be made for the necessary relief.

CRIMINAL INSANE

Your consideration is again directed to the urgent need of a building suitable for the care of the criminally insane of both the white and colored races. In spite of extra precautions a few of those committed by the Court for observation to determine their mental status have eluded the watchfulness of the authorities and have succeeded in making their escape.

Unless some provision is made for the safekeeping of patients of this type the hospital will be unable to cope with the situation.

VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS