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The History of Aurora Psychiatric Hospital- An Architectural Journey of Patient-Centered Care

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The History of Aurora Psychiatric Hospital

An Architectural Journey of Patient-Centered Care

By

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Corporate Archivist and Educator at Kradwell School

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Dedication

Aurora Psychiatric Hospital has been in existence since 1884. During this time, the hospital has been a model in providing groundbreaking psychiatric care for its patients. This booklet is a tribute to the caregivers and their patients whose shared experiences shaped the hospital's history. It is hoped that future generations will continue the fine traditions and history of care that this facility has provided for over 135 years.

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Introduction

The history of this hospital can be best told through its buildings. While people come and go, structures stay. They can be repaired, repurposed, or rebuilt. They are a more permanent sentinel of history. This is the history of Aurora Psychiatric Hospital as told through the buildings that once stood and still stand on this property today.

The Early Years

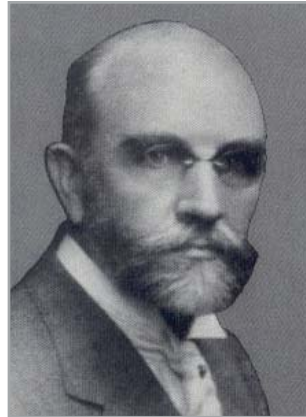
The Aurora Psychiatric Hospital has been known by several names. It was initially known as the Milwaukee Sanitarium. In May 1884, Wisconsin joined a growing list of states with private psychiatric hospitals when the articles of incorporation were filed to establish the **Milwaukee Sanitarium** as

an institution which would care for the “mildly insane”. Prominent business leaders in Milwaukee raised \$30,000 in capital stock to purchase land and establish the necessary facilities for this new hospital.



Copy of the Announcement in the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, May 4, 1884

The stockholders of the Milwaukee Sanitarium association appointed James McBride, M.D., to establish and direct the hospital. Due to his previous experiences as the Medical Superintendent of the Milwaukee County Hospital for the Insane, he felt that some people could not be cared for in the overcrowded public asylums. He felt that fresh air and “open country” was the best medicine to improve mental health. He was Milwaukee Sanitarium’s first Medical Superintendent (1884-1895).



Dr. James McBride,
founder of hospital

The East House

In 1884, Dr. McBride acquired about 15 wooded acres of land and established a hospital “for the treatment of nervous disorders (in both men and women).” He then admitted his first four patients. Initially, the hospital consisted of a remodeled brick farmhouse and a few outbuildings. The remodeled farmhouse became known as the **East House**. It was also referred to as the East Cottage at times. The East House is considered the original building of this hospital. This building was Dr. McBride’s home and housed the sanitarium’s more disturbed patients.

As demand for the hospital’s services increased, the East House was expanded on numerous occasions. It eventually had three floors. Portions of the original East House may have still been used into the 1980’s when the Kradwell Building, which denoted a series of three buildings that included the East House, was torn down to make way for the new psychiatric hospital. It was located approximately where Unit 3 (the northwest wing of the hospital) is today.



Original farmhouse, known as the “East House”



Main Building in the early 1900’s

The Main Building

In the early 1900's, Dr. McBride oversaw the construction of the **Main Building**. This large frame, three-story structure could accommodate 16 patients. With its construction, the sanitarium could now care for 20 patients. This building was located approximately where the cafeteria now resides. The Main Building was demolished in 1930.

Due to the hospital's growing reputation for quality and inventive care, people came from all over the Midwest to the Milwaukee Sanitarium for treatment, rest and recuperation. Patients arrived by either train or streetcar and would disembark at the train depot located in the Village of Wauwatosa. A coach would be available to pick up the patients and transport them to the hospital. Patients entered the hospital through its main gate at the bottom of the bluff. Located near the corner of Harwood and Dewey Avenue, one of the original gate's stone pillars still stands today.



Entrance Gate to the Milwaukee Sanitarium



Old Entrance Gate to the Hospital today

In 1895, Dr. McBride retired and moved to California. Following his departure, Dr. Richard Dewey took over as Medical Superintendent. He led the Milwaukee Sanitarium for the next 25 years, from 1895-1919. Dr. Dewey was a respected and internationally known leader in the field of psychiatry. He viewed his patients not as "cases" but as fellow human beings whom he was privileged to help.

Dr. Dewey introduced the concept of the *cottage system* to the Milwaukee Sanitarium. Under this setting, the patients resided in smaller self-contained rooms, or individual cottages, based on whether they were deemed curable or incurable. This relaxed setting allowed patients to feel more at home and aided in their rehabilitation.



Dr. Richard Dewey, MD

The Bath House

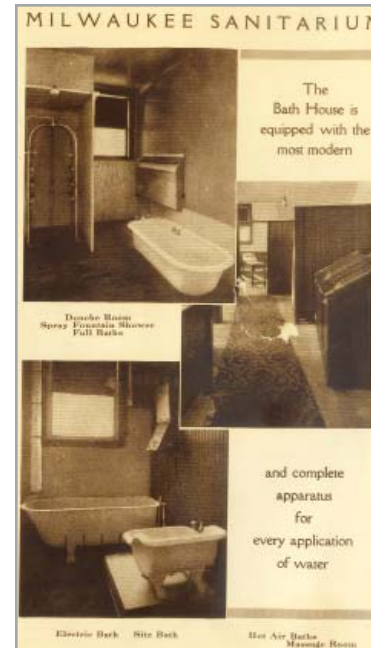
Circa 1896, Dr. Dewey constructed four more buildings. The first building was the **Bath House**, which contained the first modern hydrotherapy department in the Midwest. Water, of varying amounts, pressure and temperatures, was used for pain relief and for treating illnesses. Some of the treatments utilized sprays, jets, a douche table, fountain showers, full baths, and massage.

The Bath House also used Electric and Sitz Baths. The Electric Baths used water to conduct electricity to maintain good blood flow and to provide heat to the body. As its name implies, Sitz Baths were tubs that one sat in. They contained warm water and were used to treat ailments in the pelvic region. The warm water allowed more blood to reach that area, aiding in healing. Hydrotherapy was used until the middle of the 20th century at the hospital.

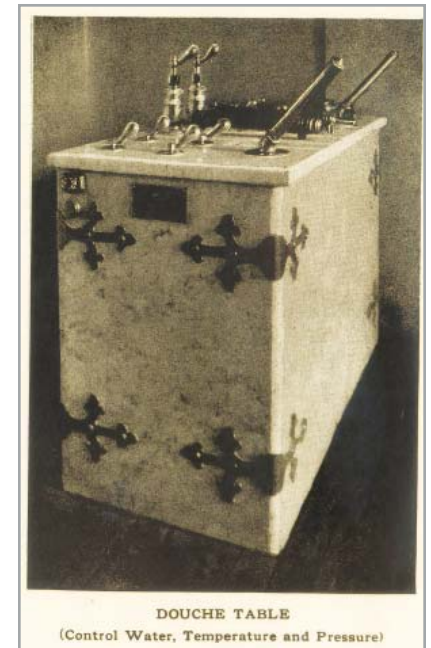
The Bath House was renamed the **North House** sometime in the early 20th century. During its almost 100 years of occupancy, it contained classrooms, the Medical Laboratory and the X-Ray Department. From the late 1960's to 1982, Kradwell School held classes in this building. The Bath House was located approximately where Unit 2 is in the hospital today. This is the portion of the hospital which faces the Culver House.



The Bath House/North House



Hydrotherapy Equipment, early 1900's



Douche Table, early 1900's



Hydrotherapy room at the Milwaukee Sanitarium, mid 1900's

The West House

In 1905, Dr. Dewey purchased an additional ten acres of land adjacent to the hospital's property. He then constructed the West Building, the Gymnasium building and the Psychopathic Hospital Building. The **West House** had nine patient rooms and a nurses' station. The West House was located approximately where Unit 1 is in the hospital today, which is near the circle driveway by the main entrance.



The West House

The Gymnasium

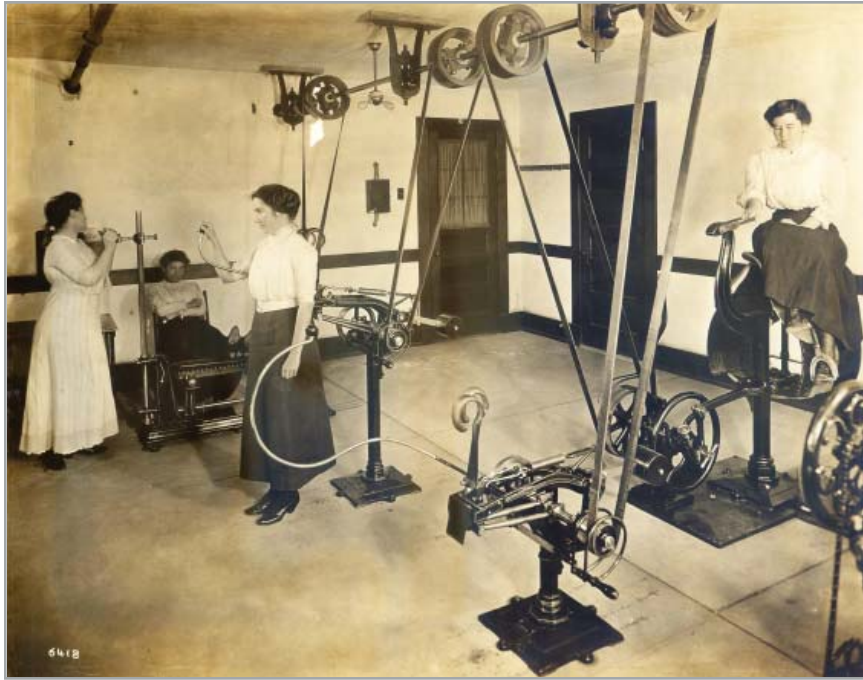
The **Gymnasium** was located approximately where the present Gym is attached to the hospital today. It was used for physical activities and dancing. Later, movies were shown there. A billiards and an arts and crafts room were located on the bottom floor. Eventually, the Occupational Therapy Department used this building.



Gymnasium



A picture of the interior of the Gymnasium from a promotional booklet



Zander Exercising Equipment

In the early 20th century, the Zander Exercising Equipment was housed in the Gymnasium. This was a series of equipment and instruments used for vibratory treatment, passive exercise, and mechanical massage. In addition, it contained a saddle for horseback-riding exercise. Later in the 20th century, the Zander Equipment was moved to the North Building.

The Psychopathic Hospital Building

The final building constructed by Dr. Dewey was a fireproof, three-story structure that was attached to the East House. It was referred to as the **Psychopathic Hospital Building** or the **Annex**. It housed the hospital's continuous baths, which were a form of hydrotherapy. The baths consisted of several large tubs, in which a hammock was slung for the patients to lie in while resting in the water. The hammock could be raised and lowered and moved from tub to tub. The patient was frequently wrapped in sheets while submerged. The temperature of the water, along with the time spent in the tubs, could be manipulated. Finally, the building had sleeping porches for patients that allowed them to relax in the fresh air at all hours, day or night. No picture of the building currently exists, but a drawing of the building does. It can be seen in the postcard below. As a point of reference, the driveway shown in the lower, right-hand corner of the postcard leads to where the current access road meets Harwood Avenue. This building, along with the Bath House, the West House and the Gymnasium were all demolished in 1982 to make way for the new Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital.



The Milwaukee Sanitarium, circa 1914

The Growth Years

Dr. Dewey stepped down from leading the hospital in 1919. After he retired, the Milwaukee Sanitarium changed leadership models. The hospital began to have both a Medical Director and a Hospital Administrator. Dr. Rock Sleyster, M.D., became the Medical Director and Mr. Gerhard H. Schroeder was appointed the Hospital Administrator. These two gentlemen formed a very successful relationship that contributed to the rapid growth and development of the hospital well into the middle of the 20th century. The leadership of both men allowed the hospital to maintain its profitability during the Great Depression.

The arrival of Dr. Sleyster and Mr. Schroeder marked the beginning of the greatest growth of the sanitarium. Fourteen buildings were constructed over a period of thirty years and an additional nine acres of land were purchased. In addition, five houses on Harwood Avenue were secured for rental by the Milwaukee Sanitarium for the hospital physicians and medical staff to live in. These rental properties were used by the hospital up until the 1970's.



Dr. Rock Sleyster, MD



Mr. Gerhard H. Schroeder



Colonial Hall, currently known as The Lorton Professional Building

Colonial Hall

Colonial Hall was one of the new buildings constructed during the growth years. It housed a central dining facility, lounges, a patient's library and a double-deck sun porch for both summer and winter relaxation. By 1959, it was renamed **Sleyster Hall** in honor of Dr. Rock Sleyster. In 1965, it was still used as a patient lounge and dining area, but employees used the building for their cafeteria and lounge too. It also had a 27-bed inpatient station. In the late 1960's, an addition was added to the building. It had 12 private patient rooms and housed the main kitchen. In the 1990's, it was renamed the **Lorton Professional Building**. Currently, the building is known as the **Lorton Professional Building** (Building 3). It houses Psychiatrist/ Psychologist offices, the Aurora Behavioral Health Center, the Medication Clinic and Medical Staff Services.

The English Cottage

The **English Cottage** was built in the 1930's for patient use. By 1959, the building was used as a residence for female patients. In 1965, it was referred to as **The Admissions Unit**. Nearly all patients were admitted for evaluation there prior to being sent to specific units on the hospital grounds. It also had an 11-bed inpatient unit. In the 1990's, it was referred to as the **Village Center** or the **Schroeder Building**. Outpatient addiction and recovery, along with individual and family therapy, were conducted there. In the early 21st century, the building was called the **Schroeder House** and contained the adolescent and adult substance abuse programs as well as intensive outpatient programs. In 2005-2006, Kradwell School held half their classes here while their building was being renovated and expanded. In 2016, the building, and the surrounding oak trees, were removed to make way for a two-story parking structure, providing close to 100 parking spaces for staff and cliental to park on campus.



The Lorton Professional Building (Building 3)



The English Cottage

Dewey Hall

Dewey Hall, constructed in the 1930's, may have been referred to as **Dewey Cottage** or **Dewey House**. It was a patient housing unit. It contained an 11-bed and a 9-bed inpatient unit. The basement was used as a patient recreation area and had a kitchen too. In 1982, the hospital's in-patient school moved into the building. It was then renamed **Kradwell High School** in honor of Dr. William Kradwell. In 1986, an elementary program was added, and the school changed its name to **Kradwell School**. By 1995, the school no longer served the hospital's inpatient residents. At that time, the demand for the school's educational services from surrounding school districts allowed Kradwell to offer a wide range of academic classes and a summer school program. During 2005-2006, the school was remodeled and expanded. Currently, **Kradwell School** (Building 10) is a private school that educates 8-12th grade students from school districts in the greater Milwaukee County area.



Dewey Hall, currently known as Kradwell School



Kradwell School (Building 10)

The South House

The **South House** was built in the 1930's. It was used to house patients. It held one inpatient unit with nine beds. Very little additional information remains on its usage over time. It appears to have been destroyed in the 1970's. If not, it was definitely demolished in the 1980's when the new hospital was built. The South House was located where Unit 4 is in the hospital today.



South House

The Garage

The **Garage** may have been built earlier in the 20th century, prior to the 1930's. It housed the hospital's horses and associated wagons and buggies. At one point, the hospital's laboratory was located on the ground floor of the garage. It also had employee apartments on the upper floor. After 1947, the laboratory moved to another building. The garage then housed the hospital's vehicles on the first floor, along with the hospital's beauty shop. Several

employee apartments were in use on the upper floor during the 1940's. The hospital's groundskeeper, Curt Gardner, lived in the building during his whole career at the hospital.



The Garage (circa 1930's, west of Dewey Hall)

The Garage used to be located close to the present-day Gymnasium. The building was moved to its current position (south of Kradwell School) in 1982 to make room for the new hospital. In 2016, the hospital built a non-brick structure, adjacent to the garage, to house the campus's growing fleet of service vehicles. That structure replaced a similar looking building that was located behind the current brick Garage, which was torn down in 2017 to make room for the new Dewey Center. The old brick **Garage** (Building 9) is still used by the hospital's Building and Grounds Department for equipment storage.



The Garage (Building 9) and adjacent building today

The Billings House

The **Billings House** was probably constructed in the 1940's. It contained two inpatient units: one 8-bed unit and one 12-bed unit. In the 1990's, it was called the **Bridgeway Dewey IRTP** building. It was an Inpatient Residential Treatment Program that provided individual and family care, self help and support programs, and activity therapy. In the 21st century, the building was called the Dewey Center and contained the adult chemical dependency services. It was demolished in 2018 to make way for a newer and improved Dewey Center that opened in the same year. The new Dewey Center is located a few yards east of the original Dewey Center.



The Billings House (old Dewey Center)



The new Dewey Center, old Dewey Center (right)

The Cape Cod Cottage

Some of the new buildings that were constructed by Dr. Sleyster and Mr. Schroeder continued the “cottage system” philosophy of care that Dr. Dewey pioneered during his tenure at the hospital. These cottages housed patients in a private, homelike setting, optimal for healing. This type of custodial care lasted for much of the 20th century with the last custodial care patient passing away in 1986.

One example of a private residence was the **Cape Cod Cottage**. While a patient stayed in this cottage, a private duty nurse cared for him or her. In the later 20th century, the house was renamed the **Valentin Clinic II**. It was used as an outpatient mental health clinic that treated patients of all ages. In 2016, the building was demolished to make way for the new Culver Alumni House.



The Cape Cod Cottage



The Avery Cottage, currently known as The Three Oaks House

The Avery Cottage

The **Avery Cottage** still stands on the campus today. This one-patient unit appears to have been used by custodial care patients until the 1950's or 1960's. At that point, the house was used for vocational counseling. In the 1990's, Marketing and Public Relations used this building. Quality Management and Philanthropy use it for a while after that. Today, it is referred to as the **Three Oaks House** (Building 5) and is used for staff offices.



The Three Oaks House (Building 5)

The Two Patient Cottage

Another example of private housing that was available on campus was the **Two Patient Cottage**. These buildings allowed for two patients to share the same structure. The first example of this cottage was built directly north of the Administration building and was called the **Kradwell House** in 1959. This was the on-campus residence of Dr. William Kradwell and his wife until 1965. In 1965, this cottage was called the **High School Building** and served as classrooms for the hospital's adolescent patients. In the 1990's, the Activity Therapy Department was in this building. Today, it is used as administrative office space and is referred to as **Building 2**.



Two Patient Cottage, currently known as Building 2



Building 2



McBride House, currently known as Aurora Behavioral Health Center

Another Two Patient Cottage was located directly north of the Avery Cottage. It was called the **McBride House** by 1959. This house was a six-bedroom halfway house where patients lived as they made the transition from the hospital to the community at large. In the 1990's, it was called the **Herrington House I** and was used for residential programs, a treatment facility, and as a "three-fourths way" house for those with addiction issues. Today, it is called the **Aurora Behavioral Health Center** (Building 6).



Aurora
Behavioral
Health
Center
(Building 6)

The Hospital

The Hospital was constructed in the 1930's and was attached to the northwest corner of the old East Building and formed what was called the **Kradwell Building** in 1965. There appears to have been three buildings in this complex. One of these buildings, or all of them, may have been called **Dewey Hall**. The Hospital/Kradwell Building had one inpatient unit of 10 beds, a second unit of 12 beds, and a maximum-security unit of 6 beds. This structure was torn down in the 1980's make room for the new hospital.



The Hospital Building at Milwaukee Sanitarium



Office Building, currently known as the Administrative Offices

Office Building

In addition to the buildings constructed for patient use, four buildings were established to house the growth in professional and administrative staff. The first of these four buildings was the **Office Building**. It has been used as an office building ever since. Today, it is referred to as the **Administrative Offices** (Building 1).



Administrative Offices (Building 1)

Employee Dormitory Building

The next structure, the **Employee Dormitory** building, was located near the old Harwood Avenue entrance to the hospital. In 1965, this building was called the **Research Building and Outpatient Center**. A psychiatric research lab was established in this building in 1964 due to a grant from the Allen-Bradley foundation. At the time, the lab at the Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital was considered one of the finest in the country. In the early 21st century, it housed the hospital's teleservice. Today the building is called the **Benjamin C. Bugbee Professional Building** (Building 7). Child and Adolescent Day Treatment and Adolescent Partial Hospital Programs are located there.



Employee Dormitory building



Bugbee building (Building 7)



Director's House

Director's House

The next building constructed by Dr. Sleyster was his private residence on campus, the **Director's House**. This house was a replica of an English Manor that Dr. Sleyster saw on one of his vacations to England. The completed house had maids, a butler, a cook, and a gardener for the proper English Garden which was located on the west end of the house. The east end of the house originally had a porch on it. It was later converted to a garage. The last president of the hospital to live in the house was Mr. Gerald Schley in the 1990's. After Mr. Schley left, the house was used for storage.



Formal Gardens, behind the Director's House

Finally, after years of neglect, attention was given to the old Director's House. In 2013, the building was remodeled and transformed into the **Lighthouse on Dewey**. The Lighthouse now provides a safe and welcoming place for those recovering from addiction issues through support groups and community activities. The mission of the Lighthouse dovetails with the services provided by the Culver Alumni House and the new Dewey Center.



Lighthouse on Dewey

Medical Director's Residence

The final structure that was built during this time was the **Medical Director's Residence**. This house provided the hospital's leading physician a place to live on campus. It was used by the hospital's medical director until the 1960's. In the 1960's, the house was known as the **EVR Building** (Educational, Vocational, and Recreational building). This building had programming for group activities, cooking classes, music lessons, woodworking and shop classes. In the 1990's, it was known as the **Herrington House II**. It functioned as a "three-fourths way" house and was used for residential programs for the treatment of addiction issues. In the 21st century, it was called the **Alumni House** and was used as a transitional living facility for those patients suffering from substance abuse. In 2017, the building was demolished so the new **Dewey Center** could be built. The services previously offered at the **Alumni House** were transferred to the new Culver Alumni House in 2016.



Medical Director's Residence

New Entrance to the Hospital

As the hospital grew, and buildings were added, the hospital needed a new entrance to the community. This coincided with the rapidly changing face of transportation in the United States in the 1930's and 1940's. While many people still rode trains and streetcars, and Milwaukee County had a world-class mass transit system, people were driving more. Due to that societal change, Milwaukee Sanitarium changed its entrance. No longer would patients walk or drive up from Harwood Avenue, they would now enter the hospital by way of Dewey Avenue. This approach continues to function as the main access to the hospital today.

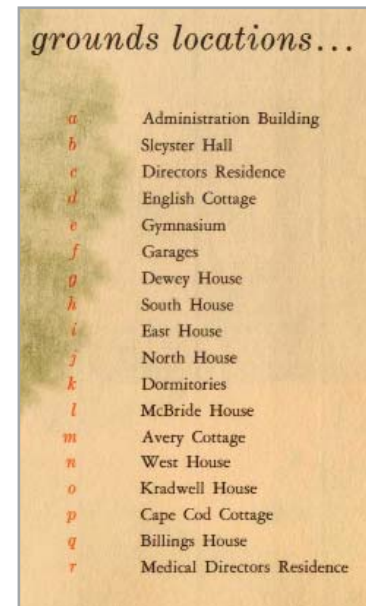


Entrance to the Milwaukee Sanitarium Grounds

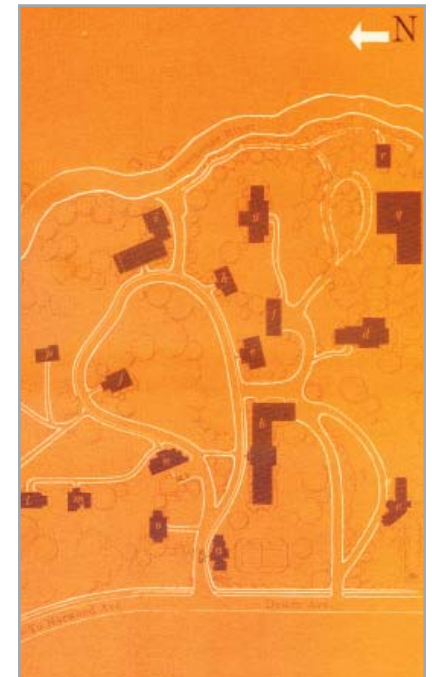


Present day entrance to Aurora Psychiatric Hospital

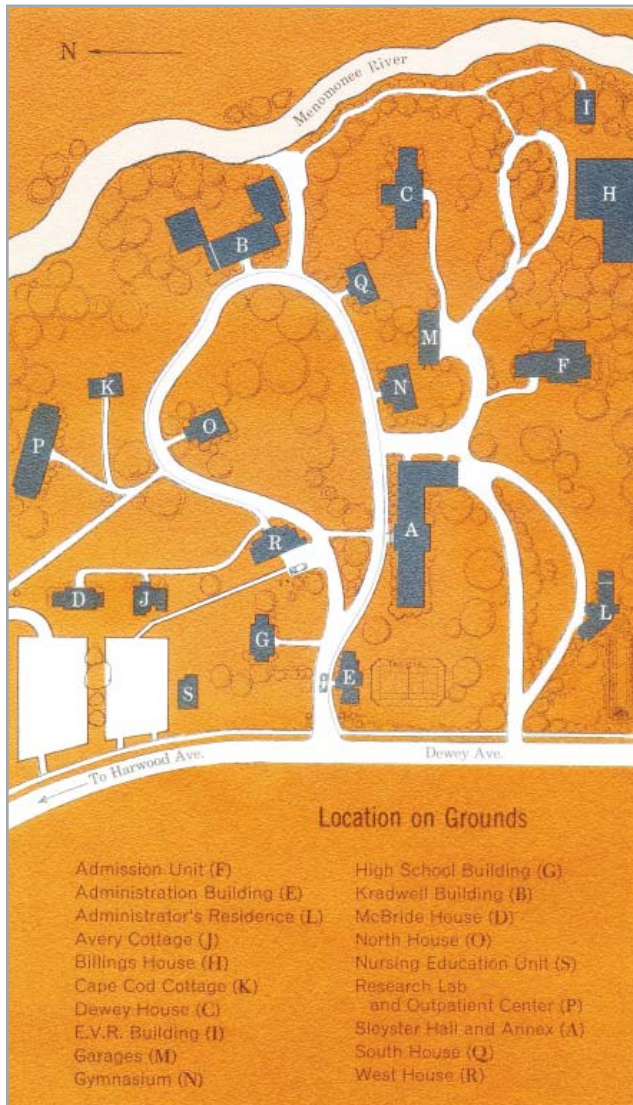
The location of these buildings constructed by Dr. Sleyster and Mr. Schroeder can be seen in a 1959 map that was included in the hospital's 75th anniversary booklet.



1959 Milwaukee Sanitarium Campus Map



These same buildings, some with new names, can be seen in a 1965 map of the campus that was included in the “A Dynamic Approach to Concerned Progressive Patient Care,” a promotional booklet published by the Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital.



1965 campus map from a hospital promotional booklet

Building a New Hospital

In the 1970's, to meet the needs of the next generation of patients, the leaders of the hospital decided to build a new psychiatric hospital. One that would be more competitive with the current market, yet still offer the quality of care for which the hospital was renowned. Despite their historical role, the West House, the North House, the Kradwell Building, the South House and the Gymnasium were all demolished to make way for the new hospital.



Aerial photograph of the Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital grounds, 1960's-1970's

As a point of reference, the top of the picture looks south, Dewey Avenue is the major road to the right, and Harwood Avenue is the street located on the bottom of the photo.

The groundbreaking for the new hospital occurred on May 13, 1982. The new hospital took about two years to complete. By 1984, this new facility allowed Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital to remain a leader in psychiatric care.



Groundbreaking for the new hospital, May 13, 1982

In the image above, pictured left to right: Emily Weinel, Barb Multhoff, Marion Klippel, Annette Koch, Dean Gruenewald, Dr. Carroll Osgood(?), Jerry Schley, Dr. Benjamin Bugbee, Dr. Arthur Norris, Dr. Cliff SMIKE and Mrs. Sophie Schroeder.

The following pictures, taken by John Rydjewski from 1981-1983, show some of the destruction of the old buildings and the construction of the new hospital. All photos are from a photo album that chronicles the construction of the new hospital.



Tree Removal, May 5, 1982



Demolition of the Gymnasium, May 25, 1982



Floor removal of Garage, June 2, 1982



Cistern from original farm



New gymnasium foundations, August 26, 1982



New roofing on Unit C, December 2, 1982



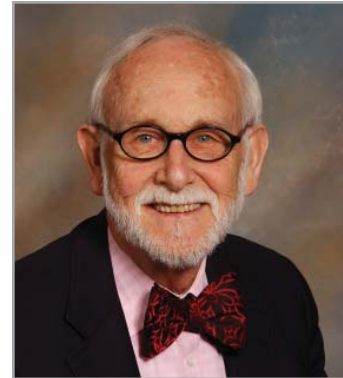
Demolition of the North Building, May 16, 1983



Main entrance to hospital, July 22, 1983



Aurora Psychiatric Hospital



Dr. Anthony Meyer

In 1990, the hospital named its 13th Medical Director, Anthony Meyer, MD. Dr. Meyer has been associated with the hospital since 1962, when he started as a medical student. By 1976, he was a member of the medical staff. In 2017, Dr. Meyer retired as the longest-standing Medical Director in the history of the hospital. In honor of Dr. Meyer's contributions to the hospital, its patients, and the community; the road that encircles the hospital was named "Meyer Way" in 2017.



Meyer Way commemorative street sign

21st Century Change and Growth

In 2001, the Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital changed its name to the **Aurora Psychiatric Hospital**. At this time, Mr. Pete Carlson was named the Executive Director of the hospital. With Mr. Carlson's guidance, the hospital underwent its most recent renaissance beginning in 2016. Approximately \$35 million dollars was spent renovating and updating the buildings and services offered at Aurora Psychiatric Hospital.



Mr. Pete Carlson

At the end of construction in 2018, four of the older buildings were gone (the Cape Cod Cottage, the Alumni House, the Schroeder House and the Dewey Center). The Culver Alumni House and the new Dewey Center were constructed in their place. The main hospital was renovated to increase its capacity for additional patients and staff. A new, two-story parking structure was built to help ease parking congestion. Finally, existing buildings on campus were upgraded to ensure their future longevity and usefulness.

Culver Alumni House

The Cape Cod Cottage was torn down in the winter of 2016. In its place, the new **Culver Alumni House** was built. The Culver Alumni House is a transitional living facility for up to 14 residents that helps individuals in recovery from addiction issues. Residents can stay for up to nine months. One housing manager lives there too. It was completed in the spring of 2017. The building accepted its first resident

in April of 2017. The functions of this new building replaced those of the old Alumni House (Building 12) that was demolished to make way for the new Dewey Center.



Culver Alumni House

Employee Parking Structure

The next old building that was dismantled was Building 13, the **Schroeder House**. This building, and the adjacent



Two Story Employee and Patient Parking Ramp

oak grove, was removed in the spring of 2016 to make way for more on-campus parking. The construction of the new two-story parking structure was completed in November 2016. The two-story parking structure took advantage of the existing grade of the land. The top level of the parking structure is level with the existing access road, while the lower level is accessible by driving around the building. It can accommodate about 100 vehicles.

The Dewey Center

The third building to be razed was Building 12, the old **Alumni House**. It was taken down in May of 2017 to make way for the new Dewey Center. The footprint of the current Dewey Center encompasses the old Alumni House and the old Dewey Center. The services and functions of the old Alumni House were transferred to the new Culver Alumni House in April 2017.

In the fall of 2018, the last building to be removed was Building 11, the old **Dewey Center**. The new Dewey Center was constructed in two phases.

The first phase was completed in 2017, and the second was completed in 2018. The new Dewey Center, which is twice the size of the old, continues to provide residential substance abuse services. Finally, the substance abuse programs were consolidated in this new building.



Demolition of Building 11, the Dewey Center



New Dewey Center

As part of this \$35 million-dollar renovation, many existing buildings on campus were upgraded. The Administration Building (Building 1) and the Lorton Professional Building (Building 3) had a wheelchair ramp installed along with improved handicap railing and access to its main doors. The sidewalks connecting these two buildings with the main hospital were replaced too. Storm water drainage was improved, and the main driveway was redone with additional handicap parking added.

The main hospital was also expanded and rehabilitated to increase capacity and address growing patient demand. A new and expanded pharmacy was constructed. New group meeting rooms were added to several wings of the main hospital. Food Service equipment and offices were updated and expanded. More room for dining was added, and the seating area was redesigned. Furthermore, heating and cooling systems were updated, bathrooms were renovated, and janitorial storage was improved.



Addition to Unit 2 with Culver Alumni House in the background

As part of this project, former patient rooms, that were being used as office space, were restored to accommodate the burgeoning need for inpatient behavioral health services in the Greater Milwaukee Area. An estimated 18 additional patient rooms were added. At the end of each unit, additional space was constructed for staff offices and meeting areas. These additions allow the campus to better provide modern mental health services.

Many other buildings had their aging and inefficient systems and mechanical infrastructure brought up to date. This included updates to heating and air conditioning systems, replacement of windows and carpeting, increased Wi-Fi capacity, and additional restrooms for staff and patients in many of the buildings on campus. All these updates to the main hospital, and its campus buildings, allow Aurora Psychiatric Hospital to remain a coveted destination for those in need of compassionate psychiatric and psychological care.

The Future ...

In 2019, the last phase of construction on the hospital grounds was completed. This milestone coincided with its 135th anniversary. Few private, medical facilities have such a rich historical legacy. While the hospital may no longer be a farmhouse and a few outbuildings, it is still a place that offers comfort, care and hope to those in need. The vision and commitment to mental health that began with Dr. McBride has evolved and will continue long into this new century. The highly trained caregivers at Aurora Psychiatric Hospital are committed to providing continued cutting-edge treatment and patient-centered care as the next chapter in the history of this remarkable institution unfolds.



We are   AdvocateAuroraHealth™

Aurora Psychiatric Hospital

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