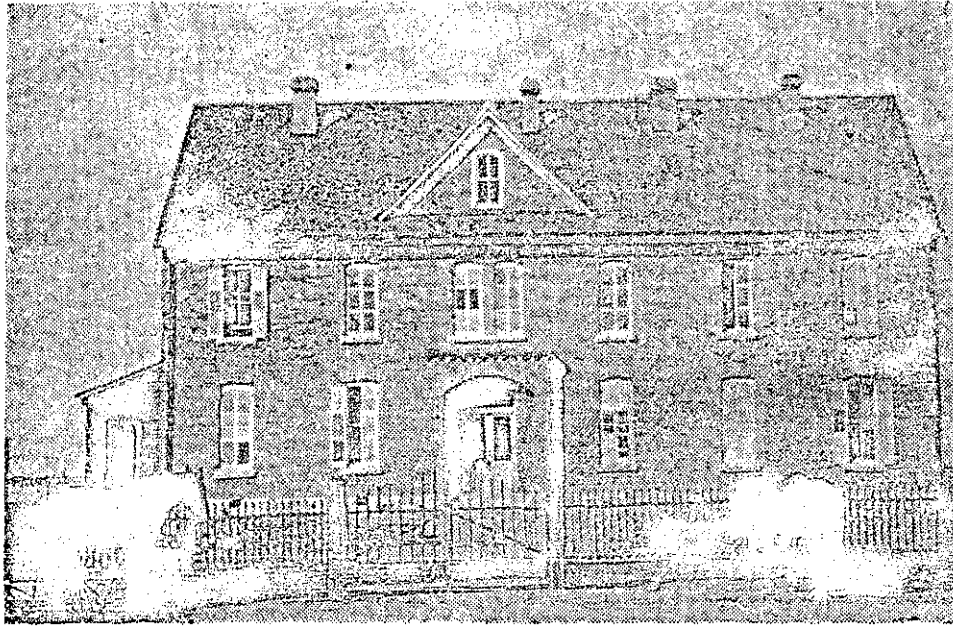


ST. ANTHONY'S HOSPITAL



St. Anthony's Hospital has the honor of being the first Catholic Hospital in the Panhandle of Texas. It was founded by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of San Antonio on the invitation of and with the assistance of Rev. D. H. Dunn and Dr. David Fly.

Amarillo, we are told, derives its name from the yellow hue of the landscape when summer skies transform spring's luxuriant carpet to a mantle of gold; but when the sisters came here no poetic imagination could conjure the luxuriance and still less could it envision the gold. The dustladen winds that gamboled and growled across the trackless treeless prairies sounded more of an unwelcome than they did to Coronado and his band of explorers four centuries before. St. Anthony, the hermit, would hardly have selected it in his day as suitable for even his penitential spirit, but that is where St. Anthony of Padua and the Rev. David H. Dunn in the designs of Divine Providence led the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in 1900, when Amarillo was little more than a hamlet. There was not a Catholic church in the vicinity and apparently it was not wanted.

The Rev. D. H. Dunn, born in Queen's County, Ireland, but ordained for the Diocese of Chicago, came to Texas in June of 1900, for his health. He was assigned to St. Mary's Parish, Clarendon, then in the Diocese of Dallas. The town of Amarillo, sixty five miles distant with a population of less than 1500 was a mission of St. Mary's Parish.

Father Dunn, in one of his first trips to the little town of Amarillo, in order to bring the sacraments to the few scattered Catholics, "realized", we are told, "the increasing prominence of Amarillo in size and location." He made the acquaintance of Dr. David R. Fly, and together they seemed to build a rosy future with no more solid foundation, than, possibly, that stranger things had happened. Evidently the two Davids set out to kill the Goliath — prejudice and disease — they realized that they could not do this without sisters, so with the approval of the Rt. Rev. E. J. Dunne, Bishop of Dallas, they hastened to put the case before Mother M. Madeline and her council in San Antonio. As an inducement, Sanborn and Glidden offered to donate the site, far removed from any habitation, and they fulfilled their promise. The nearest building was the Fort Worth and Denver depot.

In the late autumn of 1900, St. Anthony's Sanitarium, a plain two story red brick building consisting of twenty rooms, twelve of which were for patients, arose in the wilderness as one of the most pretentious buildings in the locality. It was located in the 700 block on North Polk, facing the south with the main entrance on 7th Street.

On the 13th day of February, 1901, four Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word arrived in Amarillo to open the hospital. Mother M. Alexis, a member of the Generalate accompanied the four Sisters who had been assigned to the new mission, namely, Mother M. Cleophas, Sister M. Winifred, Sister M. Conrad and Sister M. Eugenia. The first Mass was said in the chapel by Father Dunn February 16, 1901, and the winds played the aeolian harp in thanksgiving. The first Catholic institution surmounted by the cross had been planted in the prairie and the first permanent residence of Our Divine Lord in Amarillo had been erected. This was a triumph for the Church and a challenge to bigotry which was present for many a year.

St. Anthony's Sanitarium was dedicated on March 28, 1901, by the Most Rev. E. J. Dunne, Bishop of Dallas, assisted by Father Dunn and the Rev. S. P. McDonnell. His Lordship, whose territory extended to the boundary of Oklahoma and New Mexico, felt the pride and joy that comes to those who see the frontiers of civilization extended, and greater still must have been the delight of Father Dunn and naturally shared by Dr. Fly and the Sisters.

But when the oratory died down and the guests left, the little community felt alone indeed, and patronage, notwithstanding Doctors Fly, Pearsons, and Johnson's efforts, was slow in coming, and we are told that for the first year there was an average of one surgical operation a month, with an occasional emergency. Many patients, through no fault of theirs, reared in ignorance and prejudice, feared to go to a Catholic hospital.

The privations of the first years surpassed in acuteness and aloofness those of the beginning of the congregation. This hospital had neither telephone, electric light, nor sewerage, and no kindly neighbor to help in a crisis. When the freezing winds across the plains froze the pipes for weeks at a time, the sisters had to collect and melt the snow and boil the water to supply their needs. Often the sisters were both hungry and cold, and when they trudged the mile to town for the bare necessities of life, the stores would not supply them unless they had cash. To the privations was the added fact that there was no resident priest and so they even lacked the daily Bread of Life, the true Sustenance of the religious. Father Dunn could only come to Amarillo bimonthly, and then the little chapel became the parish church—for as yet none existed. It is related by the sisters that when they had few patients and little food, Mother Cleophas with one of the sisters would trudge miles contacting the scattered families to instruct them in their faith. The sisters went in turn to Clarendon to hear Mass on Sundays. In addition to the consolation of the sacraments and the Holy Sacrifice for which they hungered, they had the comfort of a warm and cheery welcome from the sisters at the Academy who always had a little bundle of groceries ready for them as "luxuries" to take home. It is recorded that on one such occasion, returning from the depot in a snowstorm, the sisters lost their way and wandered about for an alarming length of time before they sighted the hospital. In times such as these, and with loneliness of soul, it is not surprising to hear that one day when things seemed even more fruitless than usual one of the members went to the Tabernacle and said, "Jesus, are you there, and don't You know that we are here?" — But, He was there and heard, the tide began to turn.

In the spring of 1902, Father Dunn moved his headquarters from Clarendon to Amarillo and made his residence at the hospital. Now at St. Anthony's there was a happy combination of three persons, the Priest, the Doctor and the Sisters of Charity. Heroically they faced the future, sustaining each other in the tremendous difficulties that faced a pioneer institution.

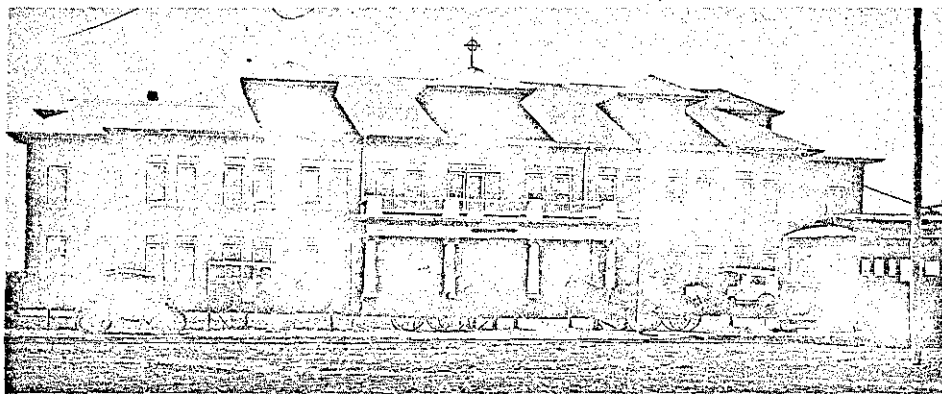
When Father Dunn came to Amarillo he was the only Pastor for the Catholics in the entire Panhandle area. In reality St. Anthony's brought the Catholic Church to Amarillo.

Father Dunn remained at St. Anthony's until his death on October 3, 1916. He was a holy priest, noble and self-sacrificing. He was truly the Guardian Angel of his widely separated flock, all who knew him revere his memory.

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1909 — FIRST ADDITION



Gradually the first little building became all too small, and an appeal was made to the motherhouse to erect a new wing to accommodate the staff of doctors who were now settling in the rapidly growing city, and bringing their patients to the hospital. The appeal was not in vain. The addition faced Polk Street and consisted of a basement and two and a-half stories of grey brick. It provided thirty patients rooms and up-to-date facilities for the care of medical, surgical and obstetrical cases. The chapel was moved to the half story and the other part of the half story, on the south end, was used as a dormitory for the sisters. The hospital was now a "T" shape.

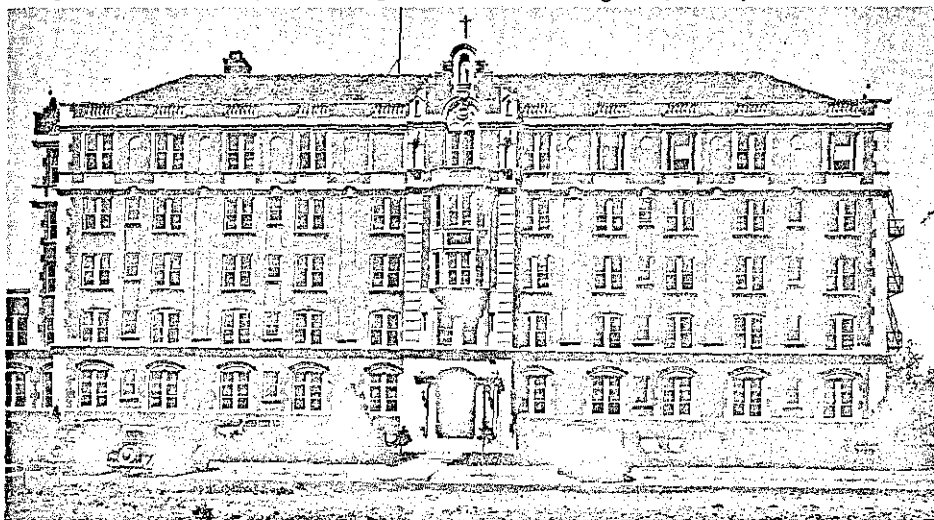
This building was dedicated by the Most Rev. Theophile Neerschaert, Bishop of Oklahoma, on Sunday, August 29, 1909.



A complete third story was added to the original building, the red brick was stuccoed grey and the south entrance was closed. This story became the Sisters Quarters or Convent.

1928

Overnight, as it were, with the discovery of oil in the Panhandle, Amarillo quadrupled its population. It was no longer a town in the northwest corner of Texas. It leaped into prominence and became the capitol of the world's oil kingdom, the population "went over the top" and even housing became a problem to tax the ingenuity of city executives.



St. Anthony's was no longer able to accommodate the demands being laid on their now popular institution. A number of rooms were reserved by out of town physicians for the care of their patients. On July 18, 1927, Bishop R. A. Gerken of Amarillo broke ground for a second addition. Work on the building started in early autumn. It consisted of a basement and five stories of cream tapestry brick in combination with art stone. The new addition extended to the north and connected to the 1909 addition by means of a cloister. It was dedicated and opened on the Feast of our Lady Help of Christians, May 24, 1928, by the Most Rev. R. A. Gerken, Bishop of Amarillo. About two months previous, Father B. O'Brien had blessed the large Cross that crowns the building and the statue of St. Anthony that is in the niche over the entrance. The building raised the bed capacity to 100. The name was changed from St. Anthony's Sanitarium to St. Anthony's Hospital at the time of this dedication.

Also in 1928, the 1909 addition became St. Anthony School of Nursing.

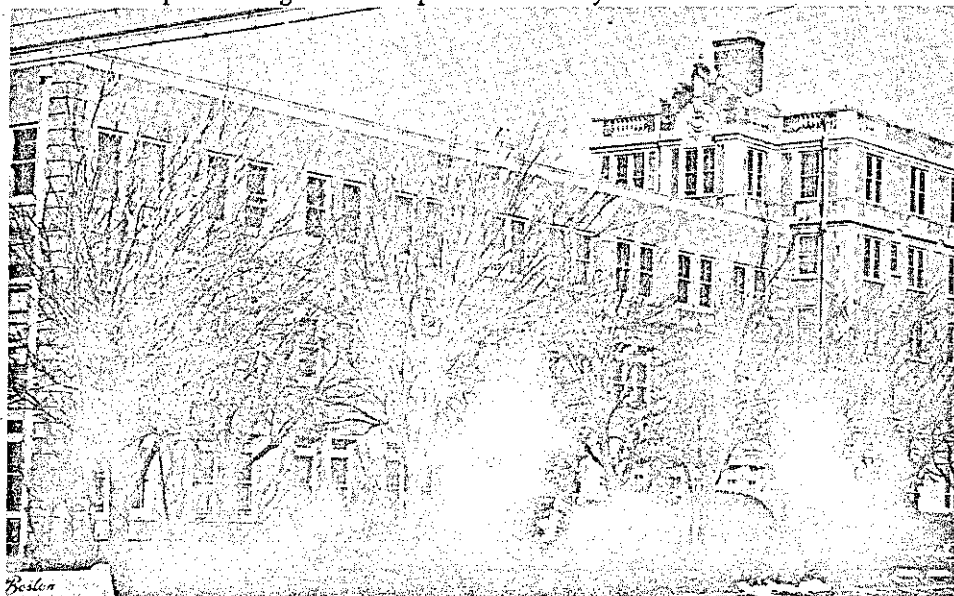
DEPRESSION

The almost fatal year of 1929 had not gone very far when shadows began to hover over St. Anthony's . . . and, in fact, over the entire country. The period that will ever be known as the Depression Era, the big bad wolf, had definitely entered every home. The Sisters of Charity, with a debt that seemed to stand out in red everywhere they looked, had once more to go on voluntary rationing. This is a part of community history, but when they were forced to close down third floor, adversity, which is not only the touchstone of character, but the test of faith, once more came to St. Anthony's and did not hastily depart. Nevertheless, during the years that followed, as well as the years before, free service was never refused to the poor, and during the years of '30, '31, and '32 as many as 40 men a day came to get a free meal and not one of them was ever sent away hungry. It is a matter of surprise to many how amidst a general cataclysm such as was the Depression Era, the institution belonging to the sisters survived.

The answer is in the real capital on which all religious institutions not only subsist but prosper, the voluntary endowment of the lives of its members, their consecration to Our Divine Lord whom they strive to imitate in His hidden and laborious life, in an effort to do good to all whether Jew or Gentile.

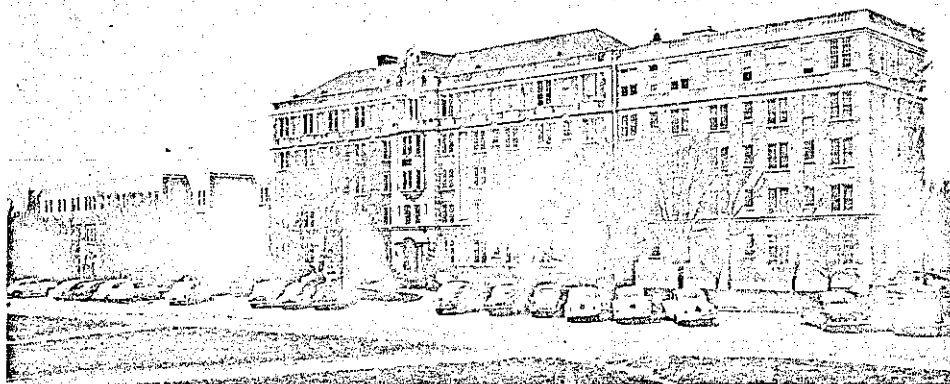
1942

In 1942, the top-half story of the 1909 addition was completely remodeled. The roof and dormer windows were removed and the walls built up to a full story height. It provided an entrance through a corridor to the third floor of the main building, thus making it convenient for the patients to go to the chapel whenever they desired to do so.



This remodeling almost doubled the dimensions of the Chapel and allowed sufficient space for a comfortable room for the Chaplain. The interior was completely refurnished. The main and side altars are Liturgical, in natural oak, with dark red velour background drapes. Over the main altar hangs a hand carved crucifix of Venetian mosaic design. The Chapel is beautiful in its simplicity and visitors and patients are attracted to it. Incomplete indeed would be the edifice erected by Christian hands for the alleviation of human suffering without an altar erected to God. It is a comfort and help to the sick to have God's Priests, Sisters of Charity, relatives and friends kneel before the altar to make intercession for them to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

The blessing of the new Chapel and its beautiful Altar on Thursday, June 18, 1942, was the occasion of the first Solemn Pontifical Mass ever celebrated in the hospital. The Mass was sung by the Most Rev. Lawrence FitzSimon, Bishop of Amarillo.



1948 — THIRD ADDITION

Bishop FitzSimon broke ground for the third addition on July 28, 1948. Strikes and the after-effects of the war made it difficult to procure steel for the project, consequently construction was delayed considerably. The cornerstone has the Monogram of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word carved into it, viz; a crown of thorns surrounding a heart mounted by three nails and a cross bearing the motto I H S—dated 1948. It was expected to lay the cornerstone in December of 1948 but due to the unavoidable delay it was laid on February 11, 1949. The addition was blessed by His Excellency Bishop FitzSimon on Sunday afternoon, August 28, 1949. The hospital wing included a basement and five stories adding thirty two beds and giving the hospital a capacity of 160 beds and 28 bassinets.



1955

St. Anthony's having become quite accustomed to limitations, graciously adjusted themselves to existing conditions and continued to make improvements within the building. They were well aware that an increase in their bed capacity would be necessary in the reasonable future. On December 13, 1955, St. Anthony's Hospital was notified that they were among those to receive a generous grant from the Ford Foundation. A timely gift indeed. The grant was used to enlarge and modernize the Central Kitchen, which was next in line for a 'face lifting' to keep in pace with the load it was carrying. The remainder of the allotted fund was utilized by other necessary hospital ancillary services.

APPROVED

St. Anthony's Hospital is a general hospital with full accreditation from the Joint Commission on the Accreditations of Hospitals.

The Commission's approval includes that of its member organizations, American College of Physicians, American College of Surgeons, American Medical Association, American Hospital Association and Canadian Medical Association.

The hospital holds institutional membership in the Catholic Hospital Association of the United States and Canada, the Texas Conference of Catholic Hospital Association, the American Hospital Association, and the Texas State Hospital Association.

1959

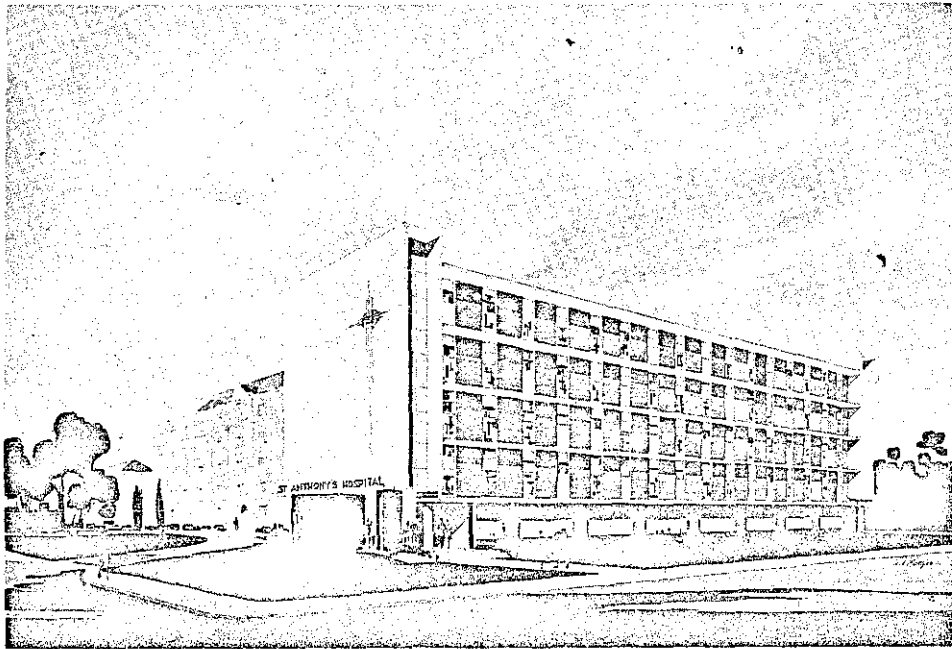
As planned, the five-story unit containing 120 beds will set east-west across the present St. Anthony's, with the long side adjacent to Northwest 8th. Preliminary construction figures carry cost of air conditioning so that highway noises and dust can be shut out.

This structure is to be financed through Hill-Burton funds and public subscription conducted by the Amarillo Area Foundation.

The new and greater St. Anthony's with its increased facilities and complete equipment offers to physicians and patients, in a day when hospitalization is a very complex problem, opportunities equal to any found in the continent. Planned on the motto that "nothing is too good for the sick", St. Anthony's is so designed as to produce a happy combination of science and art, beauty and efficiency. The psychological effect as well as the physiological and the therapeutic advantages were borne in mind when the institution was designed.

All this service to the people of the Panhandle called for ceaseless energy and heroic self-sacrifice—teamwork on the part of the sisters, the doctors, the hospital administration, the departmental heads, the nurses and the technicians, as well as cooperation from all the employees of the institution in every least detail from the elevator staff and janitor service to the chef and engineer. The personnel of St. Anthony's Hospital and the School of Nursing are happy to render service to the people and hope, with the new addition, to be able to increase their sphere of usefulness.

The imposing structure might well be a monument to the zeal of the early pioneers. Perhaps it is more. It is the embodiment of the faith the founders have in Providence and the people of Amarillo.



*This addition opened Oct, 1960
bringing bed capacity up to 250 beds.*