

## A History of Milo's Hospitals By Kevin Stitham

The McFayden Hospital was a private hospital on the corner of Milo's High Street and Highland Avenue. It operated from about 1911 to 1927. Later it became the home and office of Dr. John Curtis, (just as the Guilford Hospital became the home and office of Dr. George Howard). The building still exists in 2025, it is the building just before the Historical Society Museum on High Street. Dr. Curtis practiced for about 40 years in Milo. He was chief of staff of the Milo Community Hospital, in fact in September of 1976 he became a trustee on the board of Milo Community Hospital Inc

As reported in a June 6, 1928 article in the Observer, the Thomas Stoddard homestead of about two acres was located on Milo's Stoddard Hill on the right of the State Road as you leave Milo for D-F. The home was quite large, with views into the center of the town. With the closing of the McFayden Hospital in 1927, a committee of local business men worked to bring a modern hospital to the town. So they leased the Stoddard home and land, with an option to buy. The committee then searched for someone to make it over into a hospital. They convinced Miss Eleanor McNaughton R.N. (who grew up in Dover-Foxcroft), a recent nursing school graduate to try her hand at establishing a hospital in Milo. The committee then assigned the lease to her.

McNaughton renovated the home and installed equipment such that it was a modern hospital. It could accommodate 6 patients – but there was space to increase the total to 25 patients. She set up an operating room. Eleanor hired her mother to be the dietician, and hired Margaret Hunter R.N. as her assistant. The Observer article concluded with: *Much credit is due the committee who have worked for months toward the development of the hospital to serve the communities in the eastern part of Piscataquis county.* The formal opening of her private McNaughton Hospital took place on Saturday June 9, 1928.

However she was operating the hospital at first under the lease with Stoddard. The actual deed for the house and land from Victor H. Stoddard to Eleanor D. McNaughton dated September 18, 1929 was recorded in book 235 at page 269 PCR.D. Eleanor continued to operate her private hospital until June of 1945.

On June 1, 1945 Eleanor (McNaughton) Chase (now married) conveyed the hospital and lands to Alice D. Sargent R.N. (book 281, page 467 PCR.D). [Note she also conveyed to Sargent a thin strip of land that was adjacent to the hospital lands. Chase recited that she obtained title to that strip of land by means of a May 4, 1942 deed to her from Victor H. Stoddard *to be recorded*. However it appears it never was recorded.]

As reported in the June 18, 1945 Bangor Daily News, with Eleanor retired and living on her farm on outer Park Street in Milo, Sargent took over the operation of this

hospital as its superintendent; she changed its name to the Doble Memorial Hospital (in honor of her father John E. Doble). Sargent was a Milo native (Milo high school Class of 1919). After two years at the University of Maine, she studied and graduated from the Central Maine General Hospital in Lewiston, Maine. She hired a nursing staff of five: three R.N.s, a recent graduate of nursing school, and a nurse's aide. In addition she hired a cook and a general assistant. The hospital had a 15 bed capacity.

But Sargeant's operation of the hospital lasted only a little over a year due to her poor health. By means of a deed dated August 31, 1946 (book 287, page 79 PCRD) she conveyed the hospital, lands, *also including all personal property of any nature or description now located in the hospital known as Doble Memorial Hospital situated on said premises, said personal property consisting of household furniture, hospital furniture, household equipment and hospital equipment* to Anne & J. Burton Meisner. It would seem that the paint on the Doble Memorial Hospital sign just about had time to dry.

According to an April 5, 1952 BDN article the Meisners brought the facility up to date with: a modern operating room, nursery and autoclave (a steam sterilizer). It became a 17 bed and 11 bassinet hospital. Anne Meisner was the hospital superintendent. She had worked as an R.N. at the Mayo Memorial Hospital in D-F when it opened on January 25, 1936. Then she left for some extensive training in obstetrics et. al. in Rhode Island and in Connecticut. She came back to Mayo in 1941, in a few weeks she was promoted to be the assistant to the superintendent. She continued with Mayo until the August 1946 purchase with her husband of the Doble Memorial Hospital

But nothing is forever, especially as to the Thomas Stoddard homestead. So a little over 5 ½ years was long enough for Anne Meisner. By means of an April 1, 1952 deed the Meisners sold their Milo hospital to David and Alice Gallant of Lincoln, Maine (book 305, page 314 PCRD). The Gallants changed the name to The Gallant Hospital. They lasted about 8 years. On May 21, 1960 the Gallants sold the hospital and lands to the newly formed non-profit corporation, Milo Community Hospital Inc.

And so the hospital that was first the McNaughton Hospital, and then the Doble Memorial Hospital, and then the Meisner Hospital, and then the Gallant Hospital, underwent what would be its last name change to the Milo Community Hospital. This hospital was operated by the board of trustees of the corporation. By 1975 the massive weight of the voluminous state and federal regulations and the intricate insurance requirements all resulted in the Maine Department of Health and Welfare directing the Milo Community Hospital Inc. to finally close the doors of its hospital on Friday July 18, 1975. Those were the doors first opened by McNaughton R.N on Saturday June 9, 1928 some 47 years earlier – 47 years of continuous operation -- under five different names

