

IMAGES

... then and now

from the Indian Hill Bulletin Archives



Buckingham Lodge
1861

Camp Dennison General Hospital 1862-1865 (continued from last month)



Doctors at Dennison Hospital cared for soldiers' wounds and diseases. Recruits still in training were treated for rheumatism, liver complaints, a variety of fevers, digestive problems, skin lesions, and more. With the arrival of wounded, there was more surgery involved. Many of the wounded had been ministered to at a field hospital, some with the removal of bullets, stitches, and primary operations and amputations. While field surgeons were emergency care specialists, the general hospital surgeons dealt with both acute and chronic symptoms of patients. Besides battle wounds they treated dislocations, burns, aneurysms, pneumonia, hernias, bladder stones, and did bone/joint resections and subsequent amputations if gangrene set in. Local physicians, including Charles Gatch, William Chapman, and

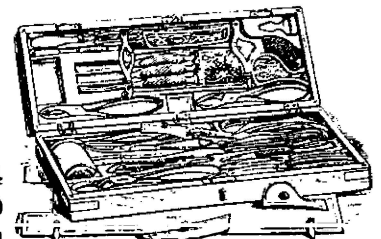
Alfred Buckingham, treated the soldiers. By 1865, C. McDermont, the Chief Medical Surgeon, had a staff of 14 other surgeons, 2 medical cadets, 4 hospital stewards, and 13 nurses. (The words "surgeon" and "physician" were interchangeable.)

Dedicated nurses served at Camp Dennison. In 1861 Sisters of Charity from Cedar Grove Academy (Price Hill) and St. John's Hospital came by train to Camp Dennison to help. A well-known nurse was Sister Anthony O'Connell, who with other nuns trudged through mud and puddles every day to assist, and who later, to avoid the expense of the train, moved to a small wooden church near the camp. Among the nuns was Magdalen who served as a German interpreter for some of the troops. As Dennison Hospital grew, other lady nurses assisted the doctors. The Chief Matron in 1865, Mrs. Lucy H. Burrows of Franklin, Ohio, was assisted by 12 nurses—10 married and 2 unmarried—who hailed from towns across Ohio and came to care for the Union soldiers. Dennison also had a resident dentist, Dr. Winthrop, who practiced in the rear of Ward 42, and who, in one year, inserted 3000 fillings and treated 500 teeth surgically.

The Ohio Volunteer, a newsletter published weekly by convalescents at the hospital, gave hospital statistics (admittances, discharges, and deaths.) It also included tidbits from the *Cincinnati Gazette*, a surgeon's column, a chaplain's column, local train schedules, and articles about the Confederacy, President Lincoln, and prominent generals. One issue contained the following personal advertisement: *WANTED - A disabled veteran who has faithfully served his country desires to correspond with some handsome young lady with twenty thousand \$ charms, with an object to matrimony. No feminine copperhead need apply. Address: Con Amore, Dennison Gen. Hospital, near Cincinnati O.*

The spiritual welfare of the soldiers fell to the two chaplains who held services on Sundays, counseled and prayed with the afflicted, and helped the illiterate write letters home. For intellectual stimulation, soldiers attended the meeting of the Dennison Debating Club, where officers and soldiers expounded their views weekly on timely topics before captive audiences.

Though in 1861 the general population expected a short war, it had to deal with 4 years of battle and the attendant injuries, illnesses, and deaths. Of the 320,000 soldiers from Ohio, 35,745 died from wounds or disease. Thousands of the sick and wounded were treated at Dennison General Hospital, which separated patients on the basis of their ailment, was well staffed and administered, and had an efficient kitchen and laundry. The barracks were well ventilated, and the staff maintained standards of cleanliness. It was universally agreed that Dennison was among the best hospitals in the military system.



At the end of the Civil War, the hospital and training camp were decommissioned, and the buildings and barracks were dismantled—with some of the materials becoming part of local barns and houses.