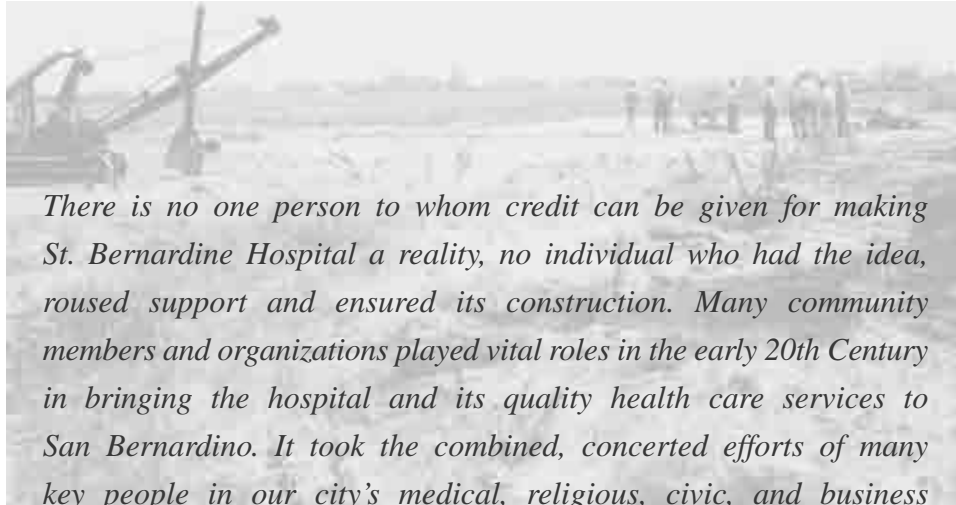


Out of Many, One

The Creation of St. Bernardine Hospital



There is no one person to whom credit can be given for making St. Bernardine Hospital a reality, no individual who had the idea, roused support and ensured its construction. Many community members and organizations played vital roles in the early 20th Century in bringing the hospital and its quality health care services to San Bernardino. It took the combined, concerted efforts of many key people in our city's medical, religious, civic, and business communities. It took the wise and willing partnership of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in Houston, Texas. And, it took a spirit of determination from an entire city and its neighbors. The result was a new hospital rising from an orchard on what was then the outskirts of the community. Yet, if we must point to the time when the fuse of enthusiasm was lighted, it must be the moment a young surgeon stepped off an inbound train in downtown San Bernardino.

When Dr. Philip M. Savage arrives home in San Bernardino following his sabbatical from a thriving medical practice to study at the famed Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, he returns as a man with a mission. He has seen the best medical care the nation has to offer and is determined to see that the people of San Bernardino have the same.

A Young Doctor's Experience with High Quality Medical Care

The Mayo brothers have revolutionized medical care by bringing traditionally separate medical specialties under one roof, enabling patients to receive “one-stop” diagnosis and treatment services. No longer do they

have to travel from doctor's office to doctor's office, and sometimes from town to town, as doctors try to figure out what's wrong and how best to provide treatment.

While that alone would be sufficient to impress any visiting physician, particularly one from the still-developing West, Dr. Savage has seen something that has impressed him even more. The Mayo brothers have a solid, professional bond with a local hospital they helped to build more than 30 years before. The hospital is owned and operated by a Catholic order of Franciscan Sisters, and it operates, Dr. Savage now knows, like a finely tuned watch. Not only is the care the Sisters provide medically superior to anything he has ever seen, the entire atmosphere is spiritually uplifting to patient and physician alike.



East Street in 1925 looking north from 3rd Street. (Photo courtesy of the San Bernardino Historical Society.)

San Bernardino, he is convinced, not only needs such a hospital, but is ready for it. The city has 30,000 residents and is the hub of the Inland Empire. In recent years, a new Santa Fe Railroad station (the largest of its kind west of the Mississippi) has been built. There are large department stores for all, and theaters, a growing arts community and nearby mountain resorts are a draw for the wealthy and the famous. The new Route 66 from Chicago to Santa Monica runs right through the city, and San Bernardino has become a mecca for thousands of travelers.

People of every description and from all walks of life gravitate to the city because of its excitement and opportunity. It is the best of all worlds, with one foot



Dr. Philip Savage is the driving force behind the effort that culminates in the building of St. Bernardine Hospital. At his urging, along with that of Father Patrick Dunne, the cost of the hospital is provided by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in Texas and the people, physicians and businesses of San Bernardino. The most generous physician-donor to the campaign, Dr. Savage becomes the new hospital's first chief of staff. His sons, Philip Savage, Jr., M.D., and James Savage, M.D., will eventually follow in his footsteps in the top medical post at St. Bernardine. (St. Bernardine Medical Center archival photo.)

in the “Wild West” and the other firmly planted in the future. Movie stars, industrialists and entrepreneurs rub shoulders with secretaries, grocery clerks, mechanics and ranch hands along downtown streets and in busy restaurants and stores.

Shoppers, businessmen and visitors of every description ride crowded elevators in tall buildings like the one in the Frank C. Platt building operated by an itinerant, lanky Texas-born kid named Lyndon Baines Johnson, who has made his way west with some buddies from high school. Some youthful adventurers will stay on to build successful lives, while others, such as young Johnson, will soon end their California revelry and head home, settle down and figure out what they might want to do with the rest of their lives.

The San Bernardino that Dr. Savage sees when he steps off the train is building a new college, a new courthouse and a bigger high school to accommodate its growth and promise. The one thing it lacks is a modern, efficient hospital. Dr. Savage figures he can do something about that.

Dr. Savage Shares His Dream

Over the next few months, Dr. Savage, who runs the small and increasingly inadequate County Hospital, approaches other area doctors and finds support for the idea of a new Catholic hospital in San Bernardino. He meets with the Reverend Patrick Dunne, Pastor of St. Bernardine Catholic Church. There is some discussion of the possibility of building a hospital on the corner of E and 5th Streets, where the old St. Catherine’s School has been razed. But Dunne, and possibly others in the church, decide the site is too close to the rapidly expanding, busy downtown and offers no room for expansion.

As the idea of a new hospital for San Bernardino spreads through the community, Dr. Savage continues his discussions with Father Dunne, and they decide to approach the Franciscan Sisters who operate the hospital near the Mayo brothers in Minnesota. The Sisters are not interested.

Meanwhile, the San Bernardino boom continues. The 1,760-seat, art deco-style California Theater is completed for vaudeville performances and motion pictures on West 4th Street, and the luxurious

California Hotel opens its doors to great fanfare. At 3rd and E Streets, the \$400,000, four-story Harris Brothers Department Store is erected, offering shoppers 42 departments on 100,000 square feet of sales floor, including a “department for creative women” and a piano studio. Other store enticements include a weekly story hour for children and the store’s shady rooftop garden, which becomes a popular site for local organizations’ summer events.

“Through the modern telegraph and air mail service, the center of the fashion world, New York City, is within 48 hours of San Bernardino’s leading department store.”

Harris Department Store promotion

1928: Local Support Grows and the Sisters are Approached

The need for a modern health care facility only increases with each passing month. Father Dunne and Dr. Savage and his associates bring the Reverend Dr. John J. Cantwell, the Archbishop of Los Angeles, into the growing circle of physicians, business owners and clergy seeking a new hospital. The fact that the Texas-based Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word built and are successfully operating St. Mary’s Hospital in Long Beach is not lost on them, nor is the fact that the order has just opened a beautiful new headquarters in Houston. Perhaps the growing order wants to expand its California presence, they reason.



Reverend Dr. John J. Cantwell, Bishop of Los Angeles, joins those who seek help from the Sisters of Charity in building a new hospital for San Bernardino. (St. Bernardine Medical Center archival photo.)

On May 26, 1928, less than a month after Mother Placidus sits down at her desk at the newly consecrated Villa de Matel, she receives a letter from Father Dunne.

Dear Mother Placidus:

Some time ago several doctors of the city, headed by Dr. Finkelberg, City Health Officer, spoke to me about the possibility of a Sisters hospital here. On the advice of our good Bishop, Dr. Cantwell, I am writing you.

This is the situation: This City has over thirty-thousand people, and apart from the County Hospital, has only one small private hospital which is unable to cater to the needs of the public. This old hospital will soon be sold to settle an estate. The Doctors and several prominent men of the City tell me that the public here as well as our own people will be willing to support a drive for building if Sisters come.

The nearest hospital to us is a Seventh-day Adventist at Loma Linda, about five miles outside the city. They do not encourage outside doctors, and consequently the regular doctors do not want their patients there.

If you consider another foundation in California it would be the right time for this City, which has grown to large proportions in the last five years. We are only eight miles from Redlands, a city of ten thousand people, and eleven miles from Riverside with about twenty-thousand.

If you would consider it, I would like to have your Sisters at Long Beach look the situation over as it is today and report to you.

With sincere wishes for you and your community.

Yours very sincerely in Christ,

Patrick Dunne, Pastor



Father Patrick Dunne, Pastor of the St. Bernardine Catholic Church and the local champion of the new hospital being built by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. (St. Bernardine Medical Center archival photo.)

The prompt reply, while not a flat rejection, is not very hopeful. The Sisters do want another presence in California and have already committed time and resources to a hospital construction in Texas. Dr. Savage, however, isn't ready to fold his hand quite yet. As the head of the small, private hospital that he and everyone knows is unable to serve all the needs of the community and as chair of the doctor's committee formed to secure a new hospital for the city, he takes pen in hand and makes his own direct appeal to Mother Placidus. This time a cash offer is included to show that

San Bernardino's physicians are committed to the idea and to the Sisters:

We have a unique situation in our city: a population of between forty and fifty thousand, fifty doctors practicing here; a small hospital of fifty beds, which I control and which I assure you, will close up and turn all its influence over to you as soon as your new hospital is complete. We have seen our neighboring hospitals have so much trouble in attempting to run a Community Hospital, that at a mass meeting of all the Doctors, we decided to invite some of the Sisters of the Catholic Church to build a hospital here, and promise them one hundred percent patronage. I have come in contact with hospitals operated by the Sisters and I know that they are operated in an excellent manner.

We are prepared to offer you a site of between four and five acres, well located in our city; \$50,000 in cash, the unanimous support of fifty Doctors, and the promise of no hospital competition in the field.

After consulting with the Order's council board, Mother Placidus's reply gets right down to business, namely that \$50,000 up front is simply not enough to justify the Order's expenditure of more than ten times that amount.

It's a start. The door is still open, and the offer of local support, while insufficient in amount, seems to interest the good Sisters. It is decided that Father Dunne will travel to Houston to meet face-to-face with Mother Placidus. Their meeting is a pleasant one, and he returns to report that the council is now leaning toward San Bernardino's proposal, but wants a \$150,000 local commitment, plus a suitable site.

The local doctors meet again and decide to up their personal cash guarantee from \$50,000 to \$80,000, to provide an essentially donated building site, and to help launch a \$100,000 community campaign early the following year, 1929. They submit the revised proposal to the Sisters, and then they wait.

The Sisters Accept the Proposal and Fund Raising Begins

Word quickly comes from the Texas Sisters that the doctors' proposal is approved by Houston but will be left unsigned for up to one year while the money is being raised.

The Sisters' word is good enough for Dr. Savage. By this time a businessmen's hospital committee has been formed to carry on the actual community fundraising effort. The campaign launch is postponed when Father Dunne is admitted to Redland Hospital with acute appendicitis.

As he recovers, Father Dunne learns that the Very Reverend Father Moulinier, S.J., is in California. Father Moulinier is the president of the Catholic Hospital Association and director-general of the hospitals of the Sisters of Charity in the United States and Canada. Father Dunne makes contact and convinces Father Moulinier to join in the local cause.

Father Moulinier jumps right in, speaking on the project's behalf to many local service clubs, lodges and fraternal organizations. To the San Bernardino Masonic Club, he says: "The women in the Sisters' hospitals bind themselves to their work by a vow. The Hospital is therefore the home of the Sisters, and they take as much personal interest in it as you do in your own homes. The patient is always right in a Sisters' hospital." At the close of the meeting, the staunchly Protestant group makes a pledge to support the project.

As 1928 draws to a close, San Bernardino remains a hotbed of growth. Many men are becoming successful, such as entrepreneurial partners Charles Engelking and E.C. "Red" Minor, respectively a manufacturer of cement irrigation pipes and a peach farmer. In November the pair submits a joint proposal for subdividing a strip of land next to their home and farm on the northern outskirts of the city, off Waterman Avenue. They plan to build 28 homes on 50- by 140-foot lots. The city approves the plan and also accepts strips of the applicants land for public use as 18th, 19th and 21st Streets.

Meanwhile, the search begins for a suitable site for a new hospital. California Hotel manager and local contractor Frank Solt lets it be known that his six-acre parcel, valued by him at \$20,000, is available, bordered by Base Line Road and E, F and 10th Streets.

By the end of March 1929 *The San Bernardino Daily Sun-Telegram* is reporting that local attorney George Hellyer, who has led many local Community Chest campaigns, will be unable to chair the hospital campaign because of ill health, but that attorney Grant Holcomb has



Charles Engelking (center) is flanked by his nephew Christian and Lily Engelking, who is holding their son Henry in her arms and is already pregnant with second son, Fred. Charles and his business partner, "Red" Minor, sold their Highland Avenue farm and some subdivision lots along North Waterman as a site for the new hospital. (Photo courtesy of Fred and Gladys Engelking.)

agreed to take it on. The campaign is already assured of \$25,000 pledged by Dr. Savage and other local physicians.

By June, the campaign is launched with "Workers Embark on \$100,000 Hospital Campaign" emblazoned across eight columns of *The Sun*. The story below the headline mentions a \$1,000 gift from *Sun* editor Robert C. Harbison and his wife, and a \$5,000 gift from businessman B.H. Shook. Small pledges are expected to be paid within one year, with larger ones, identified as "those over \$25," being given double that time.

Shook replaces Dr. Savage as vice chair of the campaign, as Dr. Savage has that week left for Europe with sons Philip, Jr., and James.⁴⁸ With them, they carry a personal letter from Father Dunne asking that, in appreciation for his work with the Sisters of Charity on behalf of the

city, Dr. Savage be given a personal audience with Pope Pius XI. The request is graciously granted in Rome.

Back home, the campaign is off to a running start. Committees formed earlier in the year and led by some of the city's most prominent people, begin their solicitations:

Service Clubs/Fraternal Organizations:

H.J. Joyce, Fred Mack, Louis Wolff and J.H. Wilson

Banks, Building & Loan and Title Organizations:

T.F. Brody, J.W. Catick, C.K. Cooper,
R.E. Roberts and W.S. Shepherdson

Public Service Corporations:

Frank Solt, H.C. McAllister and J.H. Moulton

Lumber Companies:

John C. Ralphs, William O. Harris and S.O. Ferguson

Out of Town Corporations:

R.H. Mack, W.Z. Henry, J.B. Gill and Arthur J. Brown

Special List Committees:

Herman Harris, P.M. Savage, W.T. Smith,
Dr. Gardner, John Andreson, Jr., W.M. Parker,
Dale Gentry, J.L. Oakey, Drury Weiman,
John Hadaller, Dr. R.S. Gibbs, J.E. Rich,
Dr. Baylis, J.P. Maloof, K.R. Stewart, Ted K. Clark,
Arthur Harris, J.H. McInerny, Dr. S. Forsythe,
Dr. W.W. Fenton, Fred B. Mack, A.H. Reid,
George Wolf, Clyde Whitney, Dwight Towne,
B.L. Holmes, Edward P. Doyle, S.E. Bagley,
R.F. Garner, Jr., T.M. McCord, W.M. Glasscock,
Robert Neuman, Al Morgan, H.S. Webster,
J.B. Gill, Dr. J.H. Evans, A.H. Morgan and A.B. Miller

Advance Gifts (w/60 members):

Co-chairs George W. Hellyer and R.D. McCook

Campaign director Mr. Dunster announces the campaign has created a Dental Division headed by Dr. Goodman Miller, on par with the medical division headed by Dr. Savage.

There are 10 general campaign divisions headed by Reverend Otis D. Ironmonger, W.P. Doherty, Charles L. Flack, B. Dade Davis, J.R. Thompson, H.J. Joyce, H.J. Moulton, Dr. Goodman A. Miller (Dental), Realtor E.B. Bussey and John A. Hadaller.

⁴⁸ Both sons will become prominent physicians in San Bernardino.

Under each division head are five teams. Each of the 50 teams have four volunteers. Team captains selected include: Howard L. Way, Harold D. Shaw, Ted Carpenter, H.M. Bracken, Ralph J. Ochs, Joseph L. Hickey, M.J. Coughlin, W.S. Cunningham, A.J. Gabel, J.D. Bobbitt, W.J. Wassem, P.N. McCloskey, R.B. Finney, Thayer W. Cline, Clyde C. Whitney, Charles P. Fuller, Hollis P. Allen, E.C. Eikelman, E.E. Stidham, H.D. Burns, Fred Duffy, C.H. Wuerz, Dr. C.A. Love, Jr., Dr. F.E. Clough, Henning Looke, L. Burr Belden, W.O. Harris, R.E. Hodge, C.B. Wuerz, Benjamin Edwards, W.O. Harris, E.D. Franz, R.E. Hodge, Clem D. Perkins, George Mallery, Dr. Trenton D. Huls, Dr. W.D. Doolittle, Dr. E.J. Atkinson and Dr. C.W. Adams.

By July, no fewer than 21 potential hospital sites are being considered. Some more than others, as five are being offered for free. Those include sites at 9th Street and Sierra Way, 16th Street near Waterman Avenue, 39th Street between Sierra Way and Mountain View, East 5th Street between Waterman Avenue and Myrtle Street, and at the corner of Sierra Way and Ralston Street. Everything still remains up the air. Inexplicably, one published report speculates the new hospital will be called St. Bernard's.

1929: Enthusiasm for the Hospital Continues Throughout Financial Crisis

It is a wildly speculative era of unbounded optimism, a time when vast fortunes based on unsecured borrowing and investment are being made almost overnight. In September, the spectacular Fox San Bernardino Theatre, described by a local writer as one of the most splendid theaters Fox has ever built, opens its doors. With a courtyard entrance off D Street and a main entrance on Court Street, it typifies the excitement in the city and, indeed, the nation. San Bernardino and America are on a roll.

The October 13, 1929, edition of *The Sun* carries a five-column-wide rendering of a splendid new hospital planned for San Bernardino already approved by the Sisters of Charity and the local campaign committee. Designed by I.E. Loveless of Beverly Hills,⁴⁹ it is to be of Spanish Renaissance design with a six-story center tower with four-story wings and separate four-story buildings on either side of the main structure,

all connected by covered walkways. The glimpse of what is to come electrifies the community.

In the 1920s the nation is flush with resources, opportunity, and enthusiasm, and everything seems possible. Then, on October 29, 1929 – a day that will come to be known as Black Thursday – the economic house of cards begins to falter, then shudders, and abruptly falls. The nation of unbridled optimism collapses in on itself.

It will take another two years for the Great Depression to cripple the entire country. Many businesses built mostly on debt close their doors, thousands of people are thrown out of work, and small banks built with little more than promissory notes begin to fail. One of the early casualties in the area will be a bank in Rialto, one that includes Mr. Engelking and Mr. Minor (the men readying to build 28 homes off Waterman Avenue), descendants will reveal, as among its major stockholders. The two men are about to lose everything.

On November 29, the partners sell 12 contiguous lots at the north end of their Waterman Avenue subdivision, plus a large adjacent chunk of farmland fronting on Highland Avenue, in all comprising almost 20 acres, to the Pioneer Title Insurance & Trust Co. of San Bernardino. The listed price on the recorded deed is just \$10.⁵⁰ Signing for Pioneer are President J.L. Mack and Secretary Wilmer Newton “Jason” Glasscock.

Five days later, on December 4, a group of businessmen join with the now-retired Dr. Savage in signing a formal trust agreement to purchase a suitable hospital site. Other signatories are: attorney Grant Holcomb, R.L. Mack, contractor Frank J. Solt, attorney George Hellyer, businessman Dade Davis, Dr. Savage, editor Harbison and businessman Shook. Two members of the trust group but not signatories are Dr. Emmett L. Tisinger and banker R.D. McCook.

The land deal, however, is not publicized, probably to keep people wondering where in town the new hospital

⁴⁹ Loveless was considered to be an expert in the Mission School of architecture and had worked with the diocese on other projects, such as Nazareth House in 1924.

⁵⁰ Deed, Official Papers Book 556, page 391, illustrated in Book 34 of Maps, page 9. Source: San Bernardino Hall of Records. It is neither unusual nor illegal in many states to mask the actual purchase price by recording the sale as being for \$10 or less.



A few days after the official groundbreaking ceremonies on August 15, 1930, the hard work of building a hospital begins with just a few engineers and architects standing in an open field. The nearby crane awaits. (Photo courtesy of the San Bernardino County Museum, from the Steele collection.)

might be built and to keep the campaign on the front burner of public involvement. By spring, the hospital campaign is in high gear, and despite the economic disaster looming just ahead, the pledges keep rolling in.

1930: The Sisters Make it Official and Ground is Broken

It is an exciting time. Actor Wallace Beery and eight-year-old star Jackie Cooper are up by Mt. Vernon Avenue filming scenes for “The Champ,” and Holcomb announces that a total of \$98,000 in pledges has been received. The \$100,000 needed to secure the Sisters’ support is at hand. Mother Placidus comes to town to look over the available sites and signs the papers making it official.

The promise made by Dr. Savage and others to muster community support has been, for all intents and purposes, honored, and the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word will commit more than a half-million dollars to build a hospital in San Bernardino. The official groundbreaking is set for August 15, 1930.

No less than 6,000 people turn out for the event, presided over by Bishop Cantwell. Handling the shovel

and turning over a scoop of sod each at the former peach farm are Bishop Cantwell, Mother Placidus, Webster, Mack and Holcomb, plus Dr. Savage, William Phillips of the Building Trades Council, Mayor Ralphs, Father Dunne and the project’s general contractor, Frank J. Solt.

Without fanfare that same day, Pioneer Trust sells the Highland/Waterman land it had purchased the previous December to the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word for the same \$10 amount that was reported as being paid to Charles Engelking and Red Miner. The next morning, August 16, Pioneer Trust officially deeds the Engelking-Miner site to the Sisters.⁵¹

Scores of engineers, excavators, carpenters, masons, plumbers, electricians and laborers descend upon the now barren fields, and the new St. Bernardine Hospital takes shape. Over the coming months, the former peach farm is transformed into a center that will tend to the needs of San Bernardino’s people for generations to come.

There is an almost palpable excitement in the air as people of the community make a point to drive or walk

⁵¹ Grant Deed, Official Papers Book 642, pages 274-275, illustrated in the county’s Book of Maps.

by the site on the outskirts of town. With each passing day, something new is added to the sprawling project. The first portion to be completed is the convent and chapel.

On May 13, 1931, Mother Placidus, along with Sisters Collette and Albius, arrives on the 6 a.m. train. They have come from Houston to tour the construction project.

They like what they see and discuss an official opening for the nearly completed convent and chapel. Word has spread throughout the greater medical community as well that San Bernardino is soon to have a modern, efficient hospital. Within a week of Mother Placidus's visit, young Dr. Arthur Varden, a grandson of Lena Teutechmann of the city, sets up a private medical practice in San Bernardino.



Sister Placidus

Born Katie Mulcahy in Carrigline, County Cork, Ireland, the daughter of John and Mary (Callaghan) Mulcahy, Sister Placidus entered the religious community on September 28, 1896, and received her habit December 16, 1897. Her first procession was made on the feast of St. Joseph, March 19, 1899, with final profession five years later to the day. Sister was a natural leader, with grace and hospitality, and with a keen sense of business. In 1922, she was elected Superior General of the order and was reelected twice, in 1928 and in 1934. After feeling ill for a few months, she died August 9, 1935, just a little over a year into her third term. Mother Placidus was 59 years old, but during her illness she came to the office every day, except her last day. She was found lifeless in her room by the infirmarian who had visited her several times that morning. She was buried next to Mother M. Columbia in the Villa de Matel cemetery.

On the morning of her funeral, two Bishops, two monsignors and 54 priests chanted the Office of the Dead. During her 12 years as Superior General, Congregation membership more than doubled, from 196 to 400 due in part to the constant campaign of prayer and sacrifices for vocations which she maintained. Under her administration, the Order purchased 72 acres in Houston and built the Villa de Matel motherhouse, purchased St. Mary's Hospital in Long Beach, California, and purchased Corrigan House and surrounding 60 acres of land in Ireland. The order opened St. Mary's Orphanage in Lafayette, Louisiana, rebuilt St. Mary's after a 1933 earthquake, establishing its first 100-bed unit. During her tenure, the order established the School of Nursing at St. Joseph's Hospital in Houston, purchased what became St. Theresa Hospital in Beaumont, Texas, and built hospitals in Port Arthur, Texas, and in San Bernardino.



The new St. Bernardine Hospital Convent under construction in the winter of 1930. (*St. Bernardine Medical Center archival photo.*)

1931: The Convent and Chapel Open

By mid-summer, the new convent is ready. On a clear July evening, reports *The Sun's* Society Page, more than 500 people from throughout the San Bernardino Valley, including five Sisters from St. Mary's in Long Beach, attend a gala reception. Another 100 local residents stream in before the night is over.

The building's entire façade is awash in floodlights specially erected for the occasion, and area physicians and their wives are on hand to help hostess-chair Miss Mary Martz and the resident Sisters. Each guest is escorted down a reception line and introduced to Mother Placidus and Sister Collette from Houston, as well as Sisters Emmanuel McAullife and Genevieve Quigley, who will remain in residence. With them, of course, are Father Dunne, Father Ryan and Father O'Sullivan of the Church of St. Bernardine de Siena, and Father Curran and Father Devine of the Holy Rosary Church.

During the evening, guests are taken in small groups on personal tours of the new convent and chapel by three other new resident Sisters: Theresita Cloney, Carthage Flynn and Adrien Lannon.⁵²

The reception committee reads like a who's who of San Bernardino women: R.E. Lee, E.L. Tisinger, R.E. Dowd, F.E. Clough, C.H. Laslee, W.D. Lenker, C.A. Wylie, A. Varden, P.M. Savage, W.W. Savage, S. Forsythe, H. Garcelon, F.M. Gardner, A.S. Garnett, A.L. Haenszel, R.S. Gibbs, F.X. Fiegel, J.N. Baylis, H.O. Beeson, G.W. Clark, William T. Engelman, F.B. Kell, C. Ashton Love, Charles A. Love, Ross C. Martin, R.M. Moose, X. Olsen, H.H. Parsons, W. Pritchard, L. Smith, J.C. Stadden, G. Max Webster, S.B. Richards, F.F. Williams, and Doctors Henrietta C. Dorman and 72-year-old Marie Antoinette Bennette, a San Bernardino native and the first woman ever licensed to practice general medicine in California.

According to *The Sun's* next-day account "...one of San Bernardino's most gifted songbirds," Miss Mary Martz, entertained with her "beautiful voice," accompanied by her sister, Miss Janet Martz. Other numbers featured

⁵² Sixteen other Sisters would ultimately join them that first year: Sisters Aquin Bane, Sebastian Burke (who would become the hospital's first superior/administrator), Theresa Burke, Catherine Finlay, Pauline Fohr, Oliver Gilsenan, Carmel Hogan, De Sales Joyce, Basil Loomam, Martin Mulcahy, Clare McDonnell, John O'Donovan, Anne Purcell, Annette Shanahan, Dolorita Stack and Julia Walsh.

professional Swiss musicians Mrs. Berta and Miss Leiss, who “sang the yodel” dressed in their native costumes, as well as professional accordionist Mrs. Odenning and violinist Joseph Hickey.

No one disputes the fact that with the Sisters now in residence the work progresses both faster and with less colorful expressions among the crews. By October, the new hospital is near completion. Worsening economic conditions have seen \$9,000 in pledges become seriously delinquent, but the chamber of commerce agrees to underwrite the shortfall.

October 10, 1931: St. Bernardine Hospital Begins its Community Service

On Saturday, October 10, 1931, people are invited to a two-day weekend open house. The event sees 10,000 people from across the Inland Empire flock to view the magnificent new St. Bernardine Hospital. The numbers simply overwhelm the good Sisters, who finally stop even trying to give tours and simply let the visitors roam at will throughout the six-story main building.

That morning at the official dedication ceremony, California Governor, his excellency James W. Rolph, Jr., lays the cornerstone, which reads, in part, “To the greater honor and glory of God, to the praise of His divine Son,



California Governor James W. Rolph, Jr., lays the cornerstone of the new hospital at its dedication, Saturday, October 10, 1931, which begins a two-day open house attended by an estimated 10,000 people. (Archival photo.)



Construction of the main hospital, viewed above from the back, continued in 1931 until its dedication in October of that same year. (Photo courtesy of the San Bernardino County Museum, from the Steele collection.)

the Incarnate Word, and the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and the relief of suffering humanity, this hospital is built.”

Inside the hollow granite block have been placed many items that the local committee and the Sisters feel will be of great historic interest when and if the hospital wall is ever razed.

- Proclamation of the dedication listing all pertinent officials and campaign volunteers
- Parchment manuscript and documents pertaining to the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word
- The Sisters’ own 1916 Golden Jubilee booklet
- Souvenir booklet from the Villa de Matel consecration in Houston
- Life stories and likenesses of Mother de Matel and Bishop Dubuis
- Photos of Bishop Cantwell and Father Dunne
- Letterheads of the local chamber of commerce and National Orange Show, listing their directors
- 1930 map and pictorial folder of San Bernardino
- Brochure of the U.S. army band
- Newspaper clippings from the *San Bernardino Daily Sun* and *The Evening Telegraph*
- A copy of the October 10, 1931, edition of *The San Bernardino Daily Sun*



Left: 1931 Convent completed. Right: Hospital close to completion (St. Bernardine Medical Center archival photos.)

That morning's story in *The Sun* carries a detailed description of the new hospital, which undoubtedly plays a big part in turning people out for the event:

"The building, placed well back from Waterman Avenue, is an imposing structure of Spanish type architecture. The arched entrance, supported with carved stone pilasters, is reached by a short flight of Indiana limestone steps. The spacious lobby presents a note of restrained richness with its beamed plaster ceilings, [and] marble columns. Pink Tennessee marble forms the body of the floor, which is bordered with Verde antique marble. A handsome 12-light chandelier of Spanish design is suspended from the high ceiling, while four plaques of carved stone embody the monogram of the order.

"On the right side of the lobby is the visitors' reception room, handsomely furnished with thick rugs, upholstered furniture and draperies. The main business office is at the left with a counter and desk of Verde antique marble.

"Besides the rooms, which accommodate 125 beds, the main building of the hospital houses within its walls, five surgery rooms, laboratories, administration quarters, rooms for resident physicians and nurses, visitors' apartments, six solariums, various utility rooms, [and] a large main kitchen as well as a special-diet kitchen.

"Of the four operating rooms, two are for general cases, one for special types and another arranged as a surgeons' clinic with [a] theater for medical students and visiting nurses. Equipment in these rooms is of the most

modern kind known in the world of surgery, with every device to aid in the relieving of human suffering.

"With every method known for the prevention of the spread of disease put into complete use, the atmosphere of the hospital is not that of a dreary clinical whiteness, which once prevailed. Color abounds, in the bed coverings and the draperies, creating a cheerful setting for the patient.

"Housed on the fourth floor is the obstetrics department with a large nursery and babies born in St. Bernardine Hospital will have daintily ruffled bassinets to sleep in, pink if they are girls and blue for the boys.

"Such seemingly small details as these give the St. [Saint] Bernardine Hospital a distinct personality, while the up-to-date equipment of every department that goes into making the great institution gives it character.

"Highlights of the hospital floor by floor, however, give some idea of its vastness and completeness.

"On the ground floor are the emergency surgery, research room, kitchens, cafeteria, dining rooms for physicians, nurses and visitors, the store rooms, the refrigeration plant, transformers and switchboard.

"The first floor has the administrative department and rooms for visitors, resident nurses and physicians. The four-bed wards are located on the second floor; private and deluxe rooms on the third floor; the obstetrics rooms, nursery and maternity patients' rooms on the fourth floor.

“On the fifth floor are the operating rooms, X-ray quarters, surgical supply rooms and drug department.

“In an adjoining unit to the east of the main hospital building [are] the laundry and boiler rooms. An air-cooled ventilating system as well as an improved radiator heating plant make[s] it possible to keep the hospital temperatures comfortable under every condition.

“The Sisters of Charity having the direction of the St. Bernardine Hospital in their hands are: Sister M. Sebastian, Superior and head of the new institution; Sister M. Aquin, assistant Superior; Sister M. Emmanuel, secretary-treasurer; Sister M.

Adrian, general supervisor of surgery and anesthesia; Sister M. Basil, dietitian; Sister M. DeSales, druggist; Sister M. Lawrence, X-ray technician; and Sister M. Oliver, record keeper.”

Thus, the Catholic hospital that Dr. Savage years ago envisioned on his way home from Minnesota and worked so hard with so many to help make a reality, now stands ready to meet the future and make it a brighter one for the city and the entire region. It is decided that to make sure every department is sparkling clean and well stocked, it will be another two weeks before the very first patient enters the sparkling new St. Bernardine Hospital.



St. Bernardine Hospital and Convent in 1936. (St. Bernardine Medical Center archival photo.)

Coming of Age A Hospital is Born, a City Matures



When St. Bernardine Hospital opened its doors in 1931, the City of San Bernardino was already an exciting and robust community. It had not only survived the great and often violent surge into the West, it had prospered because of it. It was a hub of rail transportation, a thriving business community surrounded by wealthy vacation spots and spas that were playgrounds of the rich and famous. Its downtown roads were paved, its streets lighted, and its streetcars filled with business people, and busy shoppers frequented its main thoroughfares. It was a community in transition, a melting pot of Mexican, Native American, Asian, and European cultures. The new St. Bernardine Hospital was perhaps the one place in the entire city where none of the differences in people mattered, a place where the science of medicine and the tenets of faith combined, bringing hope and help to thousands and enabling them to restore their health and resume their lives.

On Sunday, October 26, 1931, readers at breakfast tables across the city sit down and open *The Sun* to learn what's happening in their community. They are confronted with a large, eight-column headline that stretches across the top of page one. It's the biggest story of the day:

STABBING OPENS PROBE INTO GAMBLING 'RACKETS'

Poker Player Gravely Hurt in Knife Fray

Mussell To Start Investigation into
"Wide-open" Games in City's Downtown Area

The story begins, "Attempted murder during the early hours of yesterday tore the lid from San Bernardino's downtown wide-open gambling racket." The violence erupted, the story relates, during a five-man card game in room 318 of the Pratt Building.⁵³ "Robert Hale is believed dying at Romana Hospital and Addison 'Bitters Slim' Riley, said to be one of the operators of a gambling game in the Platt building, is sought in a drag-net thrown out in various cities. He is alleged to have thrust a knife into Hale's lung..." the result, the reporter speculated, of a "smoldering feud" between the city's "big gambling interests."

⁵³ The same building where the elevator operator a few years earlier was the lanky, young Texan who will become the 36th President of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson.



Marking the completion of the newest major health care facility in Southern California, San Bernardino contractor Frank J. Solt (standing, far left), Father Patrick Dunne (second from left) and Mother Placidus Mulcahy (seated, far right) celebrate with the new St. Bernardine Hospital Sisters (standing, left to right): Sisters Genevieve Quighley, Adrian Lannon, Dolores McCarthyu, Angelique Crabb, Teresita Cloney and Carthage Flynn. Seated with Mother Placidus are (left to right) Sisters Collette Walsh and Emmanuel McAuliffe. Pictured in the inset to the left, is Sr. Sebastian Burke who would serve as the hospital's first Superior/Administrator. (Photos courtesy of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.)

Below and off to one side of the front page of *The Sun* is a modest, one-column item that announces, "As of today, St. Bernardine Hospital is open and accepting patients."

October 26, 1931: Baby Bernardine is Born

It is ironic in hindsight that had St. Bernardine Hospital opened just hours earlier, its first patient might well have been a dying victim of a violent gambling brawl. Fittingly, however, instead of violence and death as its first calling card to the Sisters, San Bernardino initiates the hospital with the wonder of new life.

That morning, Mrs. [W.F.] Louise Landry of San Bernardino is admitted as the very first patient in the new St. Bernardine Hospital. Within a few hours, Dr. Eugene H. Hull helps her to give birth to a beautiful baby girl, whom she and her husband, employed at the California Pipe and Supply Co., decide to name Bernardine in honor of the hospital. Baby Bernardine is baptized by Father Dunne in the Convent Chapel.⁵⁴

Two days later, the first boy to be born at St. Bernardine Hospital is William E. Jensen,⁵⁵ the son of William H. and Edna I. Jensen of San Bernardino.

Despite the economic depression of the 1930s which is still gaining momentum, San Bernardino and the surrounding mountain communities remain a lively, popular spot to "see the stars." The year the hospital opens, Marlene Dietrich is in town with co-star Clive Brook filming scenes at the Santa Fe Depot for Josef von Sternberg's "Shanghai Express." Police Chief W.H. Baldwin and his 29-member police department make sure the city's famous visitors are not bothered by gawking tourists.

In 1932, Bing Crosby, who has recently been signed by CBS radio after leaving bandleader Paul Whiteman's

⁵⁴ She grew up to become Mrs. Michael Novich of Brea, California.

⁵⁵ Jensen, a lifelong San Bernardino resident, lived for many years at 3185 Dumbarton Road. All his own children, Stephanie, Cynthia, and William A., are born at St. Bernardine Hospital.



MARBLE ALTAR,
ST. BERNARDINE'S HOSPITAL,
SISTERS OF CHARITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD
SAN BERNARDINO, CALIFORNIA.
Product of Studios of
DAPRATO STATUARY COMPANY
Chicago, New York, Pietrasanta, Italy.
Designed by
I. E. LOVELESS, ARCHITECT

The magnificent marble altar in the new chapel was produced for architect I. E. Loveless by the Daprato Statuary Studios of Chicago, New York and Pietrasanta, Italy. (Archival photo.)

Rhythm Boys for a solo career, brings his mellow, jazz-scat baritone sounds to the live stage at the Fox San Bernardino, where he does two sell-out performances. He is one of the many stars who will grace this and other local stages in the coming years.

1934: Community Volunteerism Enhances the Hospital Service

Heartache soon comes to the Sisters of Charity, as their Order's original California hospital, St. Mary's in Long Beach, is seriously damaged by a massive earthquake in 1933. Thanks to the efforts of many staff and community volunteers, every patient is safely removed from the crumbling building. What's left of the former private sanitarium, however, cannot be rebuilt, and the decision is made to demolish what remains standing. It will not be permanently replaced for another four years.

The value of community volunteers, as shown during and after the Long Beach earthquake, is not lost on San Bernardino citizens.

Sister Raphael Seary is named St. Bernardine Hospital's administrator in 1934, and before the end of the year, the hospital has its first Auxiliary. More than three dozen of the city's most prominent women attend a lunch at the California Hotel, where they sign up for membership and elect officers. Mrs. George Tildon is selected as Auxiliary president, with Mrs. John S. Pullar and Mrs. F.E. Clough as first- and second-vice presidents, respectively. Mrs. Fred B. Hoskyn is elected recording secretary and Mrs. George Stephcomb, corresponding secretary.

California Offers Hope for Dust Bowl and Depression Refugees

The Great Depression deepens across the nation. By now more than 15 million are jobless across America. The nation enters a prolonged period of economic distress and hardship, affecting every man, woman and child in America. For many, the deep emotional scars of depression will last a lifetime. They lose their jobs, their homes and often their hope.

For millions, it gets worse. The Southern Plains, once the nation's bread basket, with millions of acres of flowing wheat fields fed by reliable rains, goes dry. In the severest drought in American history, 850 million tons of once rich and fertile topsoil dries to powder and simply blows away, covering entire towns with inches of dust and forcing even the hardiest families to abandon their homes and farms and look elsewhere just to survive. For many, the new dream is California.

"And then the dispossessed were drawn west from Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico; from Nevada and Arkansas, families, tribes, dusted out, tracted out. Car-loads, caravans, homeless and hungry; twenty thousand and fifty thousand and a hundred thousand and two hundred thousand. They streamed over the mountains, hungry and restless – restless as ants, scurrying to find work to do – to lift, to push, to pull, to pick, to cut – anything, any burden to bear, for food. The kids are hungry. We got no place to live. Like ants scurrying for work, for food, and most of all for land."

John Steinbeck,
The Grapes of Wrath, 1939



Sisters in front of the Grotto in 1936. (Archival photo.)

Tens of thousands head for California, hoping for a new start. But things there, too, are bad. In 1935, Los Angeles police chief Jim Davis sends more than 120 police officers to the borders of Arizona and Oregon to keep out the particularly undesirable among the domestic refugees.

Southern California's weather remains perfect, but life no longer mirrors nature's bounty. Times are hard. There are jobs, but the pay is low and few new jobs are created by the private sector. There are crops, but the markets are weak. People just try to hold on and get by.

St. Bernardine Hospital remains open, but many patients have no money, and the Sisters allow them to pay for their care with bushels of walnuts or oranges or in chickens. Often, the Sisters have to barter for cash to buy medicines and dressings.

But seeds of growth and hope are being planted. In 1936, Cleo and Leo Stater open their first small grocery store in nearby Yucaipa. That same year, Rabbi Norman F. Feldheim assumes the leadership of Congregation Emanu El in San Bernardino.⁵⁶

1940s: War Changes Life in San Bernardino

By 1939, war's winds are blowing ominously as Hitler's troops begin rolling through Poland. As has so often been the case for America, rich in resources and well protected by two oceans, the coming foreign war means jobs for Americans here at home. Recovery is upon us.

That same year, Joe and Pinky Brier buy Tri-City Airport on the outskirts of the city, and it soon becomes a hub for air-passenger transportation throughout the Southwest. Maurice and Richard McDonald open a barbecue restaurant along Route 66, and up on the nearby mountain slopes, the new Arrowhead Springs Hotel opens its magnificent doors.

World War II production brings a significant increase in San Bernardino's population and opportunity. Thousands of military and civilian personnel flood the area to work in, or in support of, the region's emerging war industry.

⁵⁶ He will lead the congregation until 1971 and become a major civic influence in San Bernardino.

For all its progress and growth and, in some sense because of it, San Bernardino remains a wide-open town. There are no fewer than 40 houses of ill-repute, and the influx of young men seeking more than jobs has been a boon to that local industry as well. But most people of San Bernardino are outraged, and city officials take action. In 1941, police raids effectively shut down the thriving red-light district for good.

America is now fully engaged in the war, and San Bernardino is a beehive of activity and progress.

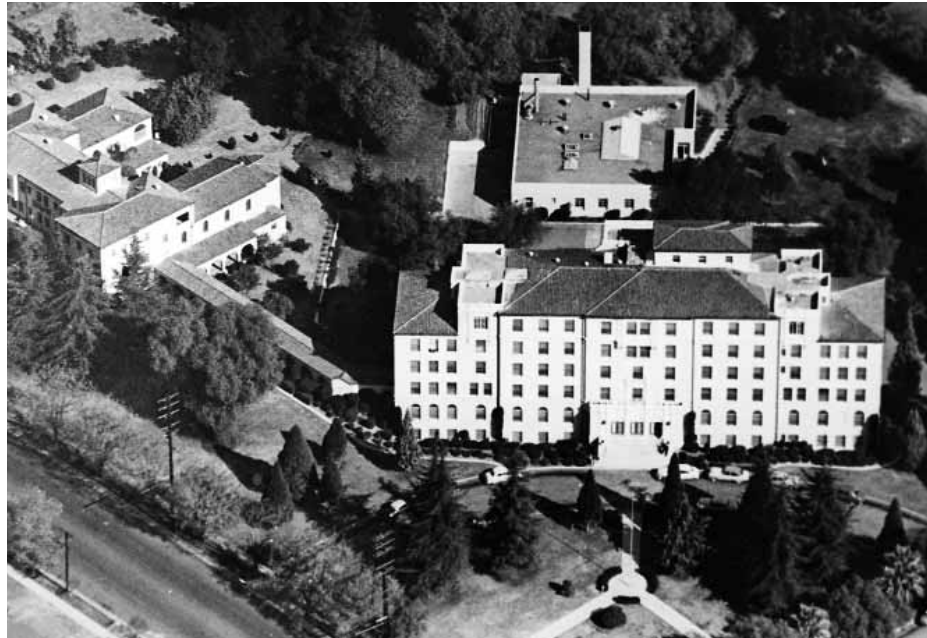
Dorothy Inghram, the first African-American teacher in San Bernardino, becomes the principal of the Mill School in the Valley Farms section of the city. St. Bernardine Hospital becomes busy and self-sufficient. With the opening of the sprawling San Bernardino Air Material Command in 1942,⁵⁷ the military presence just grows larger. Much of the city's economy is now driven by the ebb and flow of the nation's military needs.

As the two-front war comes to an end in 1945, a young soldier from Tennessee stationed in Victorville gets an off-duty, part-time job at radio station WFXM in the California Hotel in the heart of downtown. His "Dude Ranch Party" is a big hit, and when his "hitch" is up, he's hired as a full-time staff announcer. The station folds after just over a year on local airwaves, but "Tennessee Ernie Ford" quickly finds another radio job and decides to stay in the entertainment business. That same year, Sister M. Albert Shanahan is named the new administrator of St. Bernardine Hospital.

Business is booming, too, at McDonald's barbeque restaurant, and soon after the war subsides the McDonald brothers introduce a new marketing gimmick they call their Speedy Service System offering 15-cent hamburgers and 20-cent bags of French fries. People start calling it simply, "fast food." It proves to be a catchy term.

1950s: Growth for St. Bernardine

After Sister M. Sebastian Burke returns for six years from 1940-1946 to the administrator's post she held when St. Bernardine Hospital opened in 1931, she concludes that it won't be very long before the original six-story, 125-bed hospital will be insufficient to serve the needs of expanding medical technology and the growing community. The Hill-Burton Act of 1946 has been making federal funds available for hospital expansion since the end of the war and, in 1950, begins reimbursing hospitals for the free care they provide to indigent patients.



1950s aerial view of the hospital. (St. Bernardine Medical Center archival photo.)

In 1955, the hospital and the community mourn the passing of Dr. Philip M. Savage, the man whose vision of a Catholic community hospital in San Bernardino became a reality and who was one of the most respected surgeons ever to practice in the region. It is a time of transition for the hospital as well, as plans are made to construct the first major addition in the 24-year history of the hospital.

In May 1956, St. Bernardine Hospital partners with San Bernardino Community Hospital to add 225 more hospital beds to serve the community. It is determined that St. Bernardine Hospital needs 115 new beds and Community Hospital, 110 new beds. A joint capital campaign is launched, "United Appeal for Hospital Beds,"

⁵⁷ After the war, it will be renamed Norton Air Force Base in honor of San Bernardino native and U.S. Air Force flyer Leland Norton, who died in action over Amiens, France, on May 27, 1944.



Within a few years, St. Bernardine has become part of the city's landscape, a familiar and welcome sight to people in need from throughout the Inland Empire. (*St. Bernardine Medical Center archival photo.*)

with a targeted goal of \$1.25 million, to be shared proportionately by the two hospitals. The campaign initially stalls, raising only half of its first-phase goal, but is reinvigorated in July when more than 1,000 local women gather for a kick-off meeting of the General Gifts Committee.

Co-chaired by Mrs. George W. Gibson, Mrs. John P. Knauf, and Mrs. G.C. Perkins, this sub-campaign has a goal of \$300,000, and 20,000 families are to be solicited for gifts. This time, it is announced that donors may direct their gifts to either hospital or both. Shared gifts will see two-thirds of each amount going to St. Bernardine Hospital. Those prominently mentioned as playing key roles in the overall campaign are Michael Gabriel, vice president of Gabriel Brothers Department Store; businessman E. Spain, Jr.; John Pike, board chairman at Hanford Foundry Co.; the Honorable Martin J. Coughlin; and the Honorable John P. Knauf, plus James A. Guthrie, Leslie I. Harris of Harris Bros., Ernest Martin, and John M. Oakey, Advanced Gifts chair, who announces that the Harris family has pledged \$25,000.

By the spring of 1958, St. Bernardine Hospital has completed plans and funding for its 115-bed addition, and on April 7, the groundbreaking ceremonies for the new South Wing are held. It is being designed by I.E. Loveless, the same architect who designed the

original hospital 27 years before. The addition is part of a \$3 million hospital-wide remodeling program.

Over the years, the enthusiasm for the original hospital Auxiliary has waned, but with the new addition comes new enthusiasm. A new Auxiliary is formed with Mrs. Knauf elected its first president. She will serve two consecutive terms, through 1960.

1960: A New South Wing is Dedicated

Built by Robinson & Williams of San Bernardino, the new six-story South Wing is dedicated on July 2, 1960, by the Most Reverend Charles Francis Buddy, the Bishop of the San Diego Diocese. The Hospital's Guild members act as hostesses for an open house. The wing is part of a larger remodeling and construction program that, when completed in August, will air condition the entire hospital and offer all patient rooms television, telephones and piped-in oxygen. A new 200-seat doctors' meeting room is being added to the rear of the main building, as well as a new cafeteria featuring piped-in music within the main building.

On the ground floor of the new wing is a 20-bed nursing division of the pediatric department with physical therapy and electrotherapy equipment and a gymnasium. Suites and four-bed wards have televisions. There are also isolation rooms to prevent the spread of contagious disease.

There are 30 general-nursing beds each on the first, second and third floors. The fourth floor includes an 18-bed extension of the maternity ward and seven nurseries, five of which are general nurseries with eight bassinets each. One nursery is an eight-bassinet unit for premature babies, and another an observation nursery.

The new fifth floor allows an extension of the hospital's surgical facilities, with a 10-bed recovery unit, central vacuum and oxygen system. There are three radiographic rooms for X-ray and fluoroscope exams. One room houses a 250,000-volt deep therapy X-ray unit, a new service at St. Bernardine Hospital headed by Dr. G.L. Pelkey, that makes it unnecessary to move a patient from stretcher or wheelchair to an X-ray table.

The completed South Wing increases the hospital's capacity to 232 beds and provides space for specialty

medical services, such as a respiratory therapy department, an intensive care unit, a post-operative recovery room, family prenatal clinics and a pacemaker clinic.

1961: The Inland Heart Center Opens

In 1961, after two years of planning and the approval of a three-year grant from the San Bernardino County Heart Association, St. Bernardine opens the Inland Heart Center, which will soon become one of the most respected and widely-used advanced cardiac services in the nation's Southwest. The original Heart Center team comprises: cardiologists and co-chairs Randall M. Kersten, M.D., and Allen F. Sterling, M.D.; cardiologist Carl L. Cook, Jr., M.D.; cardiac surgeon Pierce J. Flynn, M.D.; pediatric cardiologist I. Hunter Crittenden, M.D.; radiologist George L. Pelkey, M.D.; and anesthesiologist Leonard M. Taylor, M.D.



Thirty years after the original main building was dedicated, the first major new \$3 million wing is added to St. Bernardine Hospital in 1960. The South Wing adds 115 new patient beds to the hospital, bringing its capacity to 232 beds. The new wing is part of an overall modernization program that provides many new, specialty medical services, creates the Inland Heart Center, and air conditions the entire facility. (*St. Bernardine Medical Center archival photo.*)