Brief history of the Stamford Hospital

The following is a compilation of information given to me by Jean Power from a booklet that came via Margaret Peggy Cantwell plus assorted Stamford Mirror – Recorder newspaper articles, assorted Mt. Eagle articles and two annual reports that are all housed at the Stamford Village Library.

First here is a little bit of background before the hospital became a reality. Dr. S. E. Churchill had an idea of making Stamford a summer resort. His Churchill Hall was completed in 1883 followed by numerous other hotels in the early 1900s. During the heyday of the hotels there could be as many as 6000 people in the village of Stamford. In 1919 Dr. Churchill sold Churchill Hall and the Rexmere properties to Mr. Nicholas P. Young. Following Mr. Young’s purchases of the properties, there were a few serious illnesses in town that had to be brought to a hospital.

In July 1920, Mr. Young gave the cottage known as Hillsover to Stamford to be used as a hospital. The new hospital was incorporated at the same time and was called the Stamford Hospital Society. In the beginning the hospital was only open in the summer months then Mr. Young put a steam heating system in the building and the hospital was kept open year-round. The first local doctors last names were: Latch, Hubble, Safford, Campbell and Culbert/Colbert from NYC. Some of the first nurses were Mrs. Blanche Maynard, Miss Rowena Taylor and Mrs. Eleanor Warren. The new hospital was immediately christened with an appendectomy on a four-year-old summer resident. There were 12 beds, surgeries were done on the 3rd floor and there was no elevator. The first officers of the hospital were: President Nicolas P. Young, VP John P. Grant, Secretary John E. Safford and Treasurer Samuel C. Robinson.

August 9, 1922 – Cost of maintaining the Stamford Hospital averages $15 per day which includes the salary of the caretaker and the nurse Miss Martha Sturgis.

September 1926 - The recent installation of steam heat in the Stamford Hospital adds much to the comfort of the patients and completeness of equipment. The hospital management truly appreciates the loyalty and continued support of the donor Mr. N. P. Young. A clinic for the removal of tonsils and adenoids will be held at the Stamford Hospital on September 18. Dr. William Colbert will operate.

November 10, 1926 - Mrs. William Martin who has been in charge of the Stamford Hospital during the summer has gone to Livingstonville for the winter. The hospital is closed for the winter.

The ladies auxiliary was formed about 1926 when a handful of ladies mended the linen for the original hospital. The first officers: Mrs. John Hanford, Mrs. Allan Chambers, Mrs. E.A. Atchison, Mrs. L.A. Govern and Mrs. A.G. Hume.

July 27, 1927 - Party for the local hospital benefit at the Stamford Country Club. The card parties arranged by the members of the ladies auxiliary and the receipts from the event are very necessary to meet the annual running expenses of the institution. Music for the party is to be furnished by the Midnight Sons Orchestra which are playing exclusively throughout the season at the Westholm Hotel and by the Wesleyan Serenaders who furnish the music for the Rexmere Club Hotel and Churchill Hall. Three $2.50 gold pieces were used as prizes. Free transportation is available from the village to the Country Club. Since the hospital’s opening this summer there have been seven maternity cases and two very severe operations.

1931 - The hospital is faced with a $700 deficit and so did not open.
In 1932 Mrs. Margaret Bathgate Becker and her son C. Bathgate Becker, Stamford summer residents, gave the village 7 acres of land overlooking the lower Rexmere Lake and a house to be used as a hospital, which opened in May. This hospital was known as the Bathgate and was equipped with 23 beds and a nursery. The Bathgate hospital was formerly called Craig Gowan and was built in 1890. Soon after the Bathgate hospital opened, for the first time in history there had to be two day and two night nurses in attendance. The ladies auxiliary furnished the new hospital with equipment, linens, curtains, china and kitchen utensils and anything else that was needed. The hospital visiting hours at this time were from 2 to 4 PM.

May 18, 1933 - Hospital was damaged by fire about 10 AM. The fire started in the porte-cochere and spread rapidly up the three-story siding to the roof and before it could be brought under control the roof, the upper floor and the north end of the building were practically destroyed. The building is believed to be covered by $8000 worth of insurance. Stamford and Hobart fire departments brought the fire under control in about two hours. At first the patients were moved to the opposite end of the hospital but when the fire continued to spread on the roof, patients were moved to different homes in the village. Practically all of the hospital equipment, bedding and furniture was saved.

In 1945 or 46 the auxiliary officially became the Ladies Auxiliary of the Bathgate Hospital and later changed the name to the Ladies Auxiliary of the Community Hospital. The ladies ran numerous fundraisers such as dinners, dances, card parties and rummage sales.
May 1957 - The Stamford Hospital Building and Fund Committee set up an office on the second floor of the Stamford Bank and a special phone #7117 in order to answer questions about the building of the new hospital.

December 2, 1959 - Community Hospital opens for patient admittance. Patients were transferred from the Bathgate hospital to the new hospital. The new hospital has a 37 bed capacity. There are currently 24 beds on the second floor and the first floor is used as a nursing home.

Visiting hours are from 12 noon to 8:30 PM daily.
1966 - The ladies ran a coffee and gift shop all the profits from merchandise sold in the gift shop goes directly to the hospital.

1966 - The annual Christmas Ball (the Ball ran for a number of years) held by the ladies auxiliary will be at Scotch Valley. Dinner and dancing tickets can be purchased from any auxiliary member. A basket of cheer will be raffled off at the ball.

1966 - The hospital installs a $6,000 generator to use in the event of a power failure.

1969 - There was a great amount of controversy following the resignation of four physicians from the medical staff.

December 13, 1969 - Christmas Ball sponsored by the Ladies Auxiliary at Scotch Valley, dinner and dancing $6 per person. Contact Mrs. T.M. Manzanero or Mrs. R.V. Coffey for tickets.

1973 - A new 40 bed skilled nursing facility opened.

1975 - Mr. and Mrs. Avery Robinson and Mrs. Anna Robinson Broadhurst were honored with a plaque for their dedication to the new nursing home.

1976 - New doctors Steven Bock, Jorge Smud, Dr. Juang, new administrator Robert Betts, new services dental, podiatry, speech pathology and respiratory care, and new sprinkler system in acute care.

1978 - New X-Ray Department, respiratory therapy department, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system, telephone system and new administrator Clayton Bean.

1978 - Auxiliary Report by Maria Diem Murphy: contributed wheelchairs, air mattresses, respiratory testing machine, Coagamate and drapes in five offices totaling $5332. The Bazaar committee raised $360, the Christmas Ball cleared $1771. During the month of November 57 volunteers gave 533 hours.

1981-84 - The hospital operated in the red with deficits as low as $11,000 and as high as $236,000.

1985 - The Intensive Care Unit was renovated. The Unit had been originally opened in 1972. There was a Junior Volunteer course.

1986 - Ultrasound equipment was installed in the Department of Radiology and Ultrasound. A demonstration took place by nurses and aides due to a contract dispute. The NYS Department of Health recommended that all five of the hospitals in Delaware County close their acute care services. Dr. Thomas Kovalik, chief of surgery, quits.

1987 - The maternity department closed and Bassett Hospital took over the management of the hospital. NYS Health Department recommends that the hospital close. They get a grant for $450,000 to help reorganize.

1988 - There was talk of merging with A.O. Fox Hospital.

August 1989 - They received $1.2 million grant to go towards a skilled nursing expansion.

October 8, 1989 - The hospital closed its doors. The skilled nursing unit remained open and became Robinson Terrace.

1989 - The report by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General states that 76 hospitals across the USA closed. Of those 76 closures three were in NY, Stamford being the only rural hospital of the three.

2011 - A 60-unit adult care assisted-living facility became part of the Robinson Terrace Residential and Rehabilitation Facility. By Karen Cuccinello