

DEDICATION
and
OPEN HOUSE

of the
Fillmore County Hospital
Geneva, Nebraska

Sunday, February 5, 1961
2:30 p.m.

FILLMORE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

JAMES BIBA, Exeter
RALPH E. O'CONNOR, Fairmont
WILL BOHLEN, Grafton
JOHN C. KROLL, Geneva
EDWARD KREJCI, Fairmont
NORMAN W. WRIGHT, Ohiowa
EDWIN A. JOHNSON, Shickley

FILLMORE COUNTY HOSPITAL BOARD

CALVIN SERR, President.....Sutton
ROBERT NICHOLS, Secretary-Treasurer.....Geneva
W.R. DORRANCE.....Fairmont
MILO KOTTAS.....Milligan
HENRY W. LAUBER.....Shickley

ARCHITECT

Arter & Speece, Lincoln, Nebraska

CONSTRUCTION

General Contract.....John Beall, Lincoln
Mechanical Contract.....Steward Plumbing & Heating, Hastings
Electrical Contract.....Myrl Moxham, Lincoln

COSTS

General Contract.....\$182,590.80
Mechanical Contract.....\$99,037.00
Electrical Contract.....\$28,375.00
Equipment.....\$59,512.14
Other Costs.....\$23,485.06
Total Costs.....\$393,000.00

MONEY RAISED BY:

Hill-Burton Fund.....	40%
Bond Issuance.....	\$97,000.00
Donations.....	\$110,180.63
Richard E. Stephenson Estate.....	\$24,671.57

Site Donated by Geneva General Hospital Association

PAUL ALBRIGHT

Hospital Administrator

Paul Albright is the administrator of the Fillmore County Hospital. He came from Tilden, where he held the same position in the hospital there. Mr. Albright is in charge of operation and personnel of the hospital.

HISTORY

Of the Fillmore County Hospital

The need for adequate hospital facilities in Fillmore County has been long recognized by people concerned with the welfare and progress of the county. The earliest hospital beginnings pre-date World War 1 when Dr. Royal Woods and Dr. Joseph Bixby built the two-story frame house east of the school house in Geneva, later known as the Archer house and now occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Hobart Ridpath and Marion.

These facilities, however, were wholly inadequate and it was not until late 1925 that the first state-recognized hospital was opened in the county.

Anna Eggenberger, a registered nurse, bought the large George W. Smith property located on Twelfth Street two blocks north of the school house in Geneva on October 20, 1925, and opened the hospital shortly thereafter. This was known as the Fillmore Hospital and remained in continuous operation from its opening until September 1, 1942.

About March 1, 1937, Mr. & Mrs. William Armstrong of Bruning came to Geneva and converted the former home of Charles Thorpe, world-famous jockey, into a hospital which was named the Geneva General Hospital. This is the site chosen for the present hospital.

For several years Geneva then had two hospitals in operation. After the death of Mrs. Armstrong's mother, late in October 1940, Mr. Armstrong closed the Geneva General Hospital.

On September 1, 1942, the Fillmore Hospital was closed after nearly 17 years of operation. On the same day Mrs. Mabel Schlecty re-opened the former Geneva General Hospital which had been closed for nearly two years. She continued the Geneva General Hospital in operation until late August 1946, when she announced that she was closing the hospital.

A group of Geneva business men, realizing the urgent need for the continuation of the operation of a hospital in the county, met August 26, 1946 and decided to buy the hospital and keep it in operation. They started a drive at 4 p.m. that afternoon and by 10 o'clock that evening, they had enough money collected and pledged to assure the purchase of the hospital from Mrs. Schlecty.

On September 3, 1946, the Geneva General Hospital Association, Inc. was incorporated by C.G. Hrubesky, John H. Koehler and Edith M. Elder, incorporators. The first board of directors consisted of Dr. Joseph Bixby, John H. Koehler and C.G. Hrubesky. The hospital was incorporated with a capital stock of \$15,000.

The new corporation took over the management of the hospital October 15, 1946 with Mrs. Berta Leeds, formerly of the old Fillmore Hospital, as manager. About a year later, the management was taken over by Mr. & Mrs. Joe Bender, who continued to operate the hospital until it was closed by order of the state fire marshal on January 31, 1957. After that date, Fillmore County had no hospital facilities.

Those who had salvaged the old Geneva General Hospital named a committee consisting of Earl H. Wilkins, chairman, John Koehler, Ross Dorrance, W.H. Weiss, J.A. Fischer, Clarence McCartney and

John Stohs to organize the county for the voting of a county bond issue to build a county hospital. Architects were employed and plans prepared for a 30-bed hospital. The committee went to the county board and obtained approval to have placed on the ballot at the general election November 2, 1948, a proposition to vote \$190,000 county bonds for the erection of a county hospital. Despite many public meetings and an extensive effort on the part of the committee and many others interested in obtaining a county hospital, the proposition was defeated by 316 votes, the vote being 2,003 for the measure and 2,319 against the measure.

The county board at the request of the committee again placed the proposition on the ballot at the general election held November 7, 1950. The proposition and plans were the same in 1948. Little public effort was made in support of the proposition and it was defeated by 950 votes, the vote being 1,103 for the measure and 2,053 against the measure.

The matter was not again submitted to the voters of the county until a special election held August 10, 1954. State authorities were threatening to close the old Geneva General Hospital unless something drastic was done by way of change and improvement. The county board again was asked and consented to put the matter of a bond issue on the ballot. This time, however, different plans were prepared for only a 20-bed hospital instead of a 30-bed hospital and only \$150,000 was asked to be raised by bonds.

A new committee with Earl H. Wilkins as chairman was formed and an extensive county wide campaign was made. Notwithstanding this effort, the proposition was defeated by 46 votes, the vote being 1,759 for and 1,805 against.

After the old Geneva General Hospital was closed by the fire marshall on January 31, 1957, people became more aware of the need for some hospital facilities in the county.

In order to get a bond issue on the ballot again, petitions were circulated throughout the county calling for a special election. New plans for a hospital were prepared for a 24-bed hospital. This time it was proposed that a large portion of the cost would be raised by subscription. A goal was set for a bond issue of \$97,000,

private subscription of \$98,000 and the balance to be raised by Hill-Burton funds. Before the election, solicitors for funds had gone over the top for the \$98,000 to be raised by subscription. The special election was held June 10, 1958. The proposition this time carried almost two to one, the vote being 2,122 for and 1,150 against.

Three days after the special election, the committee went to Lincoln for a hearing on Hill-Burton funds. Upon presentation of Fillmore County's need, those in charge of allotting the funds placed Fillmore County in second priority for \$130,000. The total project was planned to cost \$325,000.

On June 23, 1958, the old hospital corporation gave the old hospital building and site to the county for a new hospital.

On August 25, 1958, the Fillmore County Board of Supervisors appointed the following hospital board: Calvin Serr, Robert Nichols, J.A. Fischer, W.R. Dorrance and Milo Kottas. Calvin Serr was elected president with Robert Nichols secretary.

On September 24, 1958, the county board selected and employed the firm of Arter & Speece of Lincoln as architects to design and plan the new hospital building.

On December 2, 1958, the old building was auctioned off to make way for the new construction.

After plans were prepared, a letting was held on June 11, 1959. The general contract was let to John Beall Construction Co. of Lincoln for \$182,339. The mechanical contract was let to Stewart Plumbing & Heating of Hastings for \$99,007. The electrical contract was let to Myrl Moxham for \$28,375.

Ground was broken for the new building on the 18th day of July 1959.