THEDA CLARK MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

The Da Clark Memorial Hospital was erected in 1909 as a memorial to Mrs. Theda Clark Peters. Wishing to give the community some needed and worthwhile gift, she had made a bequest of $96,000. After considering the possible uses for the money, her family decided that a hospital was the best answer.

To place the new institution on a secure financial foundation, Mrs. Peters' family made an additional gift of $30,000. Construction of the building took $80,000, and the remaining $46,000 was set aside as an endowment, the income from which was to be used to help cover the cost of operation.

The hospital provided 25 beds, but the first year only a total of 196 patients were admitted. By 1919 admissions rose to 1,114. More space and more facilities were essential. The Board of Trustees decided on the construction of an additional wing, doubling the original space. Construction costs had jumped during the years of World War I. Cost of the addition was more than $150,000, and it became necessary for the family of the original donor to look for outside help in shouldering the load. Local firms and individuals made contributions totaling $60,000.

A nursing school had been started in 1910, with five students. Miss Amelia Ritchie, who was Superintendent of the hospital, directed the school. This school was affiliated with Cook County Hospital and students were given part of their training there. The school continued until 1938, and had graduated 127 students. An alumni association was formed, and since the nurses had all taken surgical training under Miss Julia Sorenson, who was connected with the hospital almost
from the beginning until she resigned in 1952, the association honored Miss Sorenson with an honorary membership.

Growing pains were felt again in 1928. The school of nursing had outgrown its quarters, and plans were drawn for a new Nurses' Home to cost $107,000. Half of this amount was furnished by the family of the original donor, the other half was subscribed by a group of interested individuals of the community.

By 1947 admissions had grown to 3,321. The population of the area served by Theda Clark had grown from 16,500 in 1910 to an estimated
The hospital trustees had felt for some time that an expansion program was necessary. With the end of World War II an application was made for approval to start construction of a new hospital. Construction was started soon after. The old building was revamped and the final result was a new hospital throughout. The hospital has 164 beds, and every modern facility is provided. Funds to pay for the hospital were provided by C. B. Clark, with the help of industry, organizations and individuals.

The new and enlarged hospital has proved its worth. During the year ending April 30, 1957, 6,307 patients were admitted, there were 1,082 births, 6,234 outpatients, and 5,342 operations performed. A school for practical nurses is being conducted, headed by Mrs. Gladys Nelson.

And, as these lines are written, expansion plans are again being formulated.

Compiled by Miss Esther Klingman, Supt.