

SHEPARD RELIEF HOSPITAL



After 13 people were injured in a trolley accident in Montour Falls in 1914, the need for a local hospital was apparent. Six years later, in 1920, the Shepard Relief Hospital was granted a state charter and selected a location on Schuyler Street.

The single biggest support for the project came from the Shepard Relief Association, which assisted Shepard Electric Crane and Hoist Co. employees in times of financial need. The Association, which was independent of company control, donated its entire treasury of \$2,000, equivalent to \$26,000 today, to the project. The sale of bonds raised \$6,000.

New York issued the new hospital's charter on Nov. 20, 1920, and the facility was named in honor of the Shepard Relief Association for its support. The first patients were admitted in May 1921.

The Schuyler Street house had been part of the David Lee family property. It had six rooms and two on staff: Supervisor Orpha “Ma” Smith and a nurse. It was outfitted with eight beds, a small operating room and a kitchen. The daily cost of a ward room was \$3 and use of the operating room \$10.

All doctors were invited to use the hospital for their patients.

To secure a guaranteed income, the hospital provided first aid services to the Shepard Electric Crane and Hoist Co. across the street.

SHEPARD RELIEF HOSPITAL EXPANSION

In 1934: A larger operating room, four patient rooms and an X-ray machine and were added.

In 1940: A two-story brick wing with an elevator was added to the north. It had a new operating room, laboratory, business office and X-ray machine on the first floor and a maternity department on the second floor.

In 1951: The original wooden structure was torn down and a south wing and middle section were joined to the existing north wing. A community fund drive and a federal loan paid for the work. The south section had additional patient rooms, and the middle section housed a lobby, business offices, a larger kitchen, storage and a doctors’ lounge and library. Also in 1951, the Shepard Relief Hospital Association voted to re-name the

hospital “Schuyler Hospital” to reflect its use by the whole community.

In 1962: Remodeling added an extension to the north wing. Because of lack of funds, it was only one story. Later in the year, the final south wing work was completed: a sun porch and a private room.

Sources: “From Creaky Stairs to Cat Scans” by Dr. William Tague and Schuyler Hospital website



THE NEW HOSPITAL ON THE HILL

By the late 1960s, the need for a larger hospital to properly serve Schuyler County residents and visitors was evident. Additionally, parking at the facility on Schuyler Street was a severe problem.

Several parcels of land were evaluated, but in the end, a large tract of land along Steuben Street on the west hill above Montour Falls was offered by Belle Cornell at no cost. (The home in which Mrs. Cornell lived is just to the east of today's hospital complex.) Mrs. Cornell was president of the Montour National Bank and a long-time treasurer of Schuyler Hospital's board of directors.

The new hospital opened in July 1972, shortly after Hurricane Agnes devastated the Corning/Elmira area. Many patients were transferred from Corning Hospital to be cared for at the original facility and at the then-new Schuyler Hospital.

The Shepard Relief Hospital buildings became The Falls Home assisted living community in 1973.

The new Schuyler Hospital was dedicated to Jane Delano, who was born in Townsend in 1862 and became a nurse and founded the American Red Cross Nursing Service. Delano died in 1919 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. While the hospital is dedicated to Delano, we do not know why that name has not ever been used.

SCHUYLER HOSPITAL EXPANSION

In 1975: The Rollin O. Baker Medical Arts building, a primary care unit, was built next door.

In 1988: The Seneca View Skilled Nursing Facility, with 120 beds, was added to the original facility.

In 1993: The September Hill Birth Center & Stork's Landing was opened in a neighboring home that had been owned by the Seymore family. It was re-named September Hill Women's Center in 2001. The hospital's obstetrics unit was closed in 2011.

In 2012: A shared-services affiliation with Cayuga Medical Center of Ithaca was established.

In 2014: A \$6.5 million state grant funded improvements to the hospital's clinical laboratory, radiology unit, operating rooms, outpatient registration area and gift shop, as well as its main entrance and hallway.

In 2020: A two-phase, major expansion and modernization project is expected to be completed by July. The first phase was the construction of a new 15,000-square-foot medical-surgical inpatient unit. Phase 2 includes the complete renovation of the current medical-surgical unit into a 9,185-square-foot new primary care center.