

THE LYING-IN HOSPITAL OF NEW YORK

IT WILL be difficult to give in detail within these few pages the history of an institution which covers the past 145 years. This was admirably recorded in 1938 by Dr. James A. Harrar, former chief surgeon, in his presentation of "The Story of The Lying-In Hospital." I have borrowed freely from this in presenting the history of the institution.

In 1798, through the efforts of 224 subscribers, the financial foundation for The Lying-In Hospital was established. "The very comfortable asylum for women whose circumstances will not enable them to make provision for their confinement in childbed" was opened in August, 1799. Its existence was brief for its doors were closed during the second year. In 1801, however, the use of the "square ward" of the New York Hospital was granted to The Lying-In Hospital. In that same year male medical students were permitted in the maternity ward to witness deliveries. This was the first time that such a privilege had been granted to male students in this country. Except for a brief period between June 9, 1822, and May 7, 1823, this union with The New York Hospital continued until June 10, 1827, when the Lying-In ward was permanently closed.

The Society of The Lying-In Hospital remained inactive until August, 1892, when it absorbed the Midwifery Dispensary which had been organized in 1888. The Midwifery Dispensary had been established through the efforts of Drs. James W. Markoe, Samuel Lambert, H. McM. Painter, and J. Clifton Edgar for the training of medical students in home deliveries. The 199 confinements during the first year increased to 2,583 during the third year, when it became a part of *The Society of The Lying-In Hospital*. In 1894 a suitable building to house The Lying-In Hospital was obtained in addition to the dispensary. This was the former residence of Hamilton Fish, located at Second Avenue and 17th Street. It provided accommodations for 32 patients and the necessary operating and delivery rooms and facilities for the staff of doctors and nurses. In 1902 the hospital was moved to the new eight-story building, which had been built for its use on the same site.

Until 1932 these facilities made possible the teaching of thousands of undergraduate and graduate physicians. The teaching in the medical schools at that time was limited to didactic and clinical lectures. The large outdoor service, therefore, provided the only means whereby the students, under the supervision of the house staff and attending surgeons, came in actual contact with patients. They not only performed the deliveries and witnessed and assisted at operations, but also gave anesthetics and the necessary postpartum care. In some years as many as 3,000 cases were handled on the outdoor service, thus providing a satisfactory insight into obstetric practice to many prospective young physicians. The district covered by the service extended from the Battery to 42nd Street, the antenatal care being rendered in two clinics; one at the main hospital and the other on Broome Street on the lower east side. Abnormal cases were transferred by ambulance from the home to the hospital. The good results obtained were evidenced as

early as 1918 when the hospital was able to report the maternal mortalities in their first 69,071 consecutive tenement house confinements as 218, one in every 317 labors, or 3.156 per thousand births. These statistics

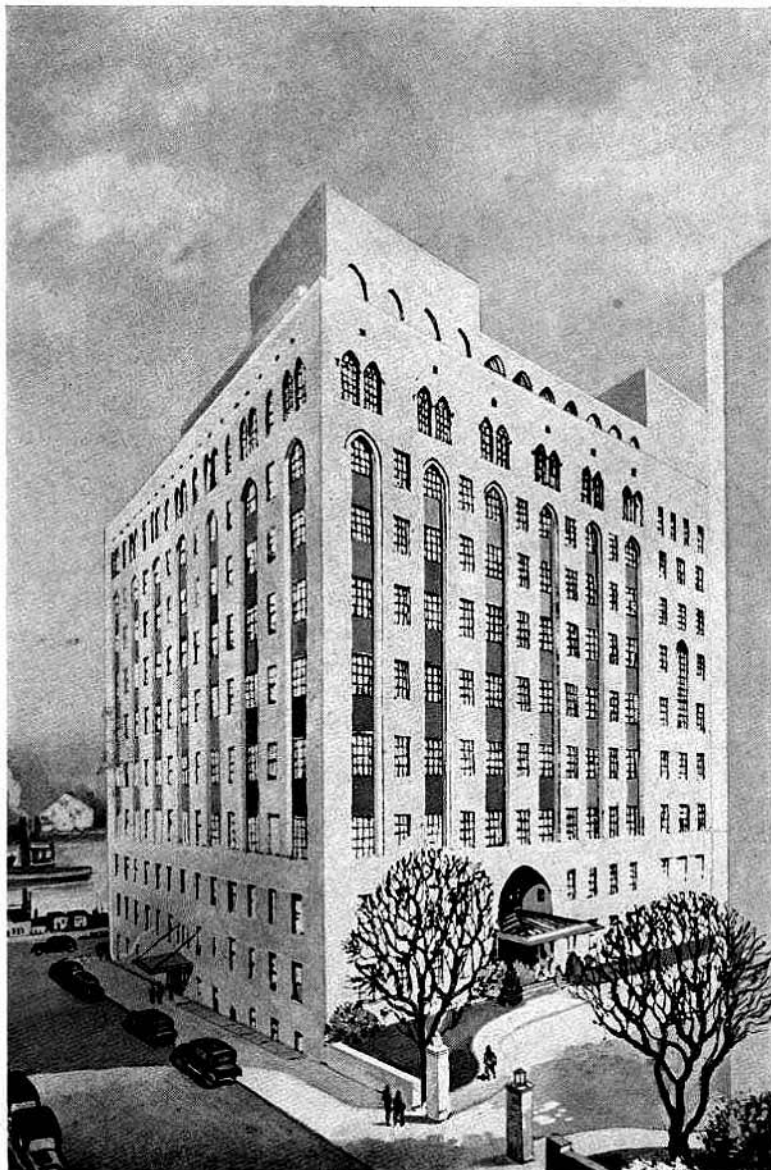


Fig. 1.—The new Lying-In Hospital—September, 1932.

are uncorrected and include all cases transferred during labor or post-partum into the Lying-In or other hospitals and dying there.

The teaching of students and physicians was not limited to the outdoor service. An average of 43 house officers, 101 undergraduate stu-

dents, and 51 postgraduate students were graduated every year. In the thirty-year period between 1902 and 1932, over 5,800 doctors were given a brief bedside instruction and experience in actual deliveries. The 200,270 babies delivered since 1890, indoor and outdoor service combined, offered ample opportunities for the training of these men.



Fig. 2.—Photograph showing a typical four-bed ward.



Fig. 3.—Photograph of a typical delivery room.

The Lying-In Hospital likewise contributed greatly to the field of research. It established one of the first obstetric pathology laboratories in the country. The hospital pioneered in research on relief of pain during labor which culminated in the use of morphine and scopolamine

hypodermically, followed by the rectal instillation of ether in oil. This method was based on the original work of Dr. James Gwathmey, the anesthetist at the hospital.

In 1904 the *Bulletin of the Lying-In Hospital* made its first appearance as a scientific publication. The Bulletin appeared at intervals until 1932 when it was discontinued.

The Lying-In Hospital remained a separate institution until 1928 when it again became a part of The New York Hospital after a lapse of 101 years. This was made possible through the generosity of four individuals who subscribed the \$6,000,000 necessary for the merger. At that time The New York Hospital, with Cornell University Medical College, was contemplating new buildings for their joint enterprise.

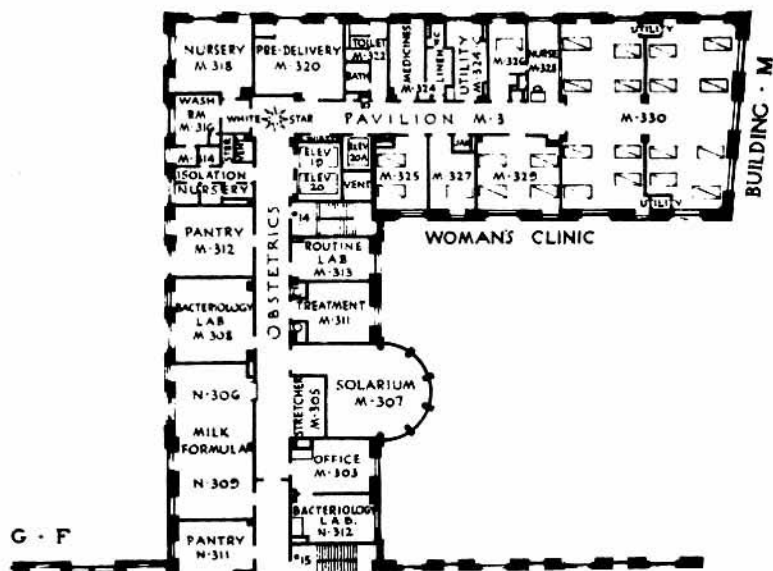


Fig. 4.—Floor plan of a typical obstetrical ward.

The present Lying-In Hospital or the *Woman's Clinic of The New York Hospital* is part of the 1,000-bed medical center located between 68th and 71st Streets from York Avenue to the East River. The eleven-story building housing The Lying-In Hospital has complete facilities for teaching and research in addition to outpatient service and accommodations for 192 patients. With the new affiliation The Lying-In became a combined Obstetrical and Gynecological Clinic. Of the total number of beds, 26 rooms are available for private patients and 36 beds for semiprivate patients. Of the 130 ward beds, 40 are devoted exclusively to gynecology. Isolation cases are cared for on one floor devoted entirely to this purpose. In itself and as part of the medical center it presents every opportunity for the teaching of medical students and house staff and for investigative work in all the branches of its specialties.

The medical staff, under the direction of Dr. H. J. Stander, obstetrician and gynecologist in chief and professor of obstetrics and gynecology, is composed of both full- and part-time physicians. No courtesy staff

is maintained. Each member of the staff shares in the teaching of students and in the supervision of the care of ward patients. The full-time staff devotes all of its time to teaching, research, and the care of patients.

The prewar schedule called for a house staff of 18 members. Six interns are appointed each year for a period of two years. At the end of the second year two interns are selected to complete the residency of five years. With each succeeding year of training the house staff assumes greater responsibility so that during the final year (fifth year) the residents are directly responsible for the care of the ward patients. Throughout the period of training the schedule is arranged to permit equal distribution of work between obstetrics and gynecology, and ample opportunity is afforded for original investigative work. The house staff assists the attending staff in the care of their private and semiprivate patients. The home delivery service was discontinued in 1942. By special arrangement the Pediatric Department of The New York Hospital cares for the premature babies born in The Lying-In Hospital and is consulted whenever indicated in the care of the newborn infant in the nurseries. This offers an excellent opportunity for the house staff to study the problems associated with the care of the newborn infant.

With the exception of serology and postmortem examinations, all the necessary examinations, including bacteriology, chemistry, pathology, and x-ray are performed at The Lying-In Hospital. This arrangement permits the utilization of such facilities for investigative work of all types. House staff participation in these departments is encouraged as a basis for the sound practice of obstetrics and gynecology.

The eighth floor of the building is devoted entirely to delivery rooms, operating rooms, and labor rooms. Two operating rooms are used for gynecological operations. The senior medical students devote two months to work in obstetrics and gynecology, and during this period they are housed within the building so that they may observe and assist with major complications whenever they occur.

The lower floor is devoted to the outpatient service. In addition to the routine obstetrical and gynecological clinics, specialty clinics are conducted. These include cardiac, toxemia, postpartum, cystoscopy, sterility, endocrine, radiation, etc.

Special staff conferences are held each Monday and staff rounds each Friday. Journal Club meetings are held monthly.

Since the opening of the new building in 1932 (Sept. 1, 1932-Dec. 31, 1943), The Lying-In Hospital has cared for 46,861 obstetrical patients and 12,262 gynecological patients. The yearly averages are 3,300 deliveries and 1,100 operations. The data of all these cases are available for study on the special punch card system which has been maintained since 1932.

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