

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received JUL 10 1986  
date entered 8-13-86

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Providence Lyng-In Hospital

and/or common Women and Infants' Hospital

**2. Location**

street & number 50 Maude Street

N.A. not for publication

city, town Providence

N.A. vicinity of

Congressional District #2  
Hon. Claudine Schneider

state Rhode Island

code 44

county Providence

code 007

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Hospital

**4. Owner of Property**

name Women and Infants' Hospital of Rhode Island

street & number 50 Maude Street

city, town Providence

N.A. vicinity of

state Rhode Island 02908

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Providence City Hall

street & number Dorrance and Washington Streets

city, town Providence

state Rhode Island 02903

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Providence City-wide Survey

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1986

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

city, town Providence

state Rhode Island 02903

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The four-and-a-half-story building faces north at a slightly oblique angle to the street. The entrance drive from Maude Street circles in front of the main structure which is built of red brick with limestone trim. The gable roof is slate. Stevens called the style of the building "Collegiate Gothic." Its most distinctive features are the six-story central tower and a series of projecting bays combined with an overall fenestration pattern that provides a pleasing rhythm along the length of the building. The plan allows for a comfortable interior division of work space and patients' accommodations while the numerous windows provide ample light and air circulation. The 1954 ell extensions are also brick, while the two-story, flat-roofed infill of the same date is smooth-finished concrete.

A course of limestone above the first floor level on all elevations is the single horizontal element of the original design and serves as a visual base for the bays and towers that extend upward. The central tower is turreted at each corner with a round cap drawn to a point. The point is extended upward by a windvane whose decoration is a long, graceful stork in flight with a baby in a blanket suspended from its beak. The portion of the tower above the roofline includes limestone reliefs of a winged cherub, an angel, and a mother and child. The tower has five bays at each floor. "Providence Lying-In Hospital" is inscribed in the course above the second-story windows. The main entrance has limestone quoins on both sides and a flat Gothic arch that is now obscured by a cloth awning, probably added around 1975. The door itself is a modern one of aluminum and glass. The window pattern of the main elevation is symmetrical above the second floor. The majority of windows are a vertical bi-fold type that fold outward as the edges are drawn to the center. Each sash has ten panes.

At the rear of the building on the western end are the service entrances to the hospital. A one-story, flat-roofed section which originally served as the laundry connects the building to the former boiler room. A new two-story, brick addition was built in 1975 adjacent to the 1954 ell extension for the new heating system.

The original ward plan by Stevens has been altered by the extensive interior remodeling of the 1970s. Two important interior spaces remain: The Fathers' Waiting Room with Gothic detailing and the main waiting area with wood paneling and a marble fireplace with a flat, Gothic arch.

The Nurses' Home, designed by Wallis E. Howe and constructed in 1933, follows the detailing of the original building with the exception of the windows, which are six-over-six double-hung sash. The building is located about twenty yards from the western end of the hospital.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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The building is set at an acute angle to the hospital and roughly faces the eastern end of the hospital building. Like the hospital, the Nurses' Home is four and one-half stories high and constructed of a red brick similar to that of the original building. The trim detail including the window and door quoins and course at the first story are "cast stone" rather than limestone. Dormers and pedimented bays punctuate the slate roofline in the same manner as the original hospital building.

An addition to the Nurses' Home, with an auditorium and facilities for residents was completed in 1941, and faithfully continues the composition of the 1933 building. It was designed by Howe and Pratt. The addition extends northward, the end wall of which is the first elevation to meet one's eye upon entering the site from Smith Street. This end wall has a three-story segmental bay with a tight, horizontal cluster of windows surrounding the second and third stories. The auditorium remains in use, and the rest of the building is primarily office space. A sign attached to the 1933 part of the building dedicates it to Ellen D. Sharpe, whose donations provided the site for the hospital and the entire cost of the Nurses' Home and its addition. A two-story modern enclosure of glass and steel now connects the Nurses' Building to the main hospital building. The enclosure is heavily screened by mature plantings and coniferous trees which are evident all along the north and east sides of the enclosure.

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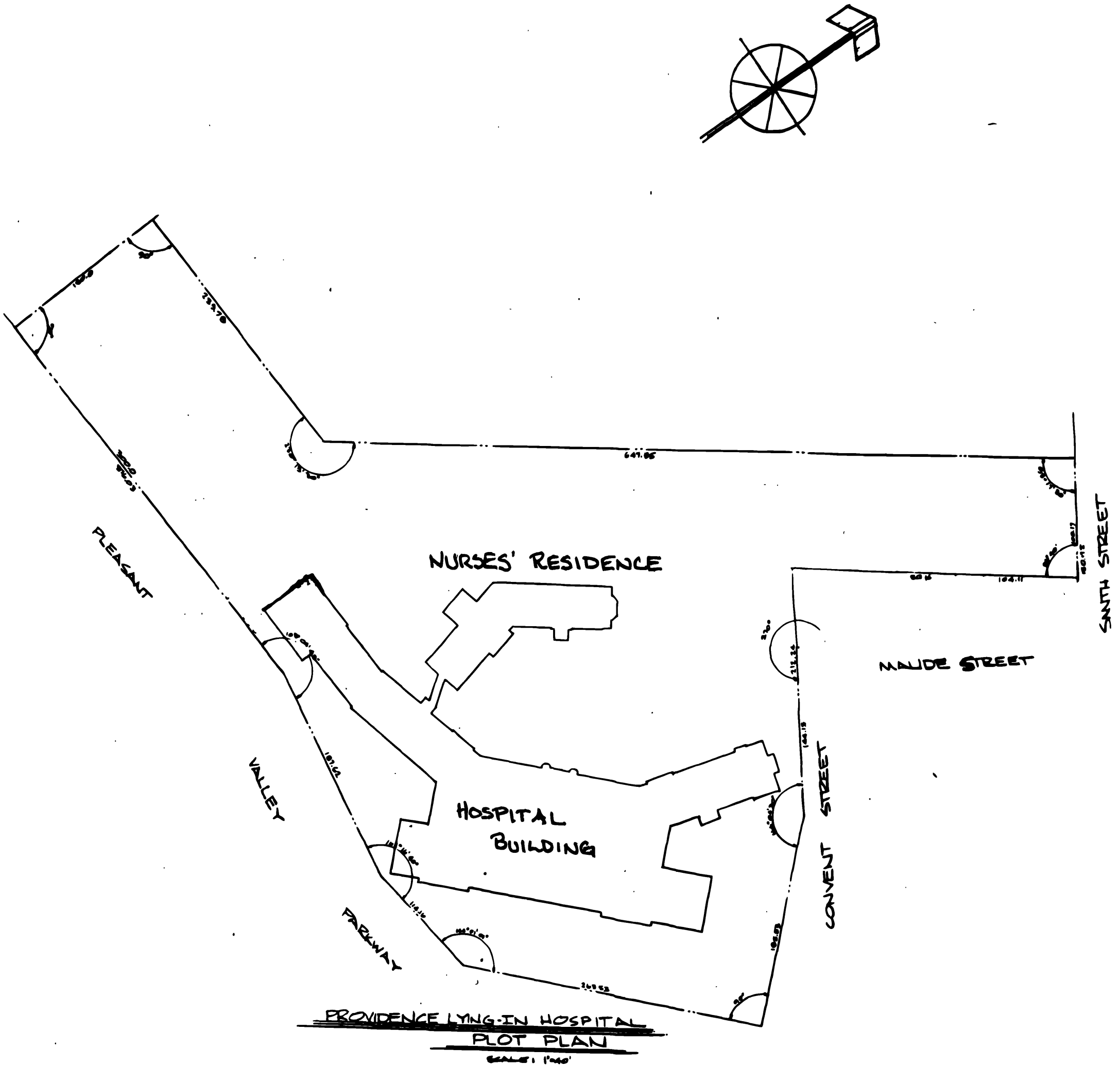
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## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Women's history
<b>Specific dates</b>	1926, 1933	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Edward F. Stevens, and Wallis E. How	

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Providence Lying-In Hospital, now called Women and Infants', is significant in a local context for its contribution to the patterns of Providence social history and for its architecture. The Hospital, as the first to provide on-going obstetrical services in Rhode Island and the first to offer specialized nurses' training, was on several occasions recognized by leading national authorities on maternity care, who lauded Lying-In Hospital for its contribution to the development of the modern concept of a hospital devoted to healing and to teaching--an attitude beyond the earlier notion of hospitals as institutions for the indigent. Pioneering the concept of caring for the emotional as well as medical needs of its patients, Lying-In Hospital established one of the oldest volunteer hospital organizations in the United States, the Board of Lady Visitors, which was specifically charged with concern for patient comfort and social needs. Architecturally, Women and Infants' Hospital is a relatively rare local example in the Collegiate Gothic mode, widely used in certain early-twentieth-century American institutional buildings. A product of the innovative hospital design firm of Stevens and Lee, Lying-In is its only Rhode Island commission. The Lying-In well illustrates Edward F. Stevens' innovations in design. Women and Infants' Hospital retains its essential integrity of design as Stevens conceived it; infill construction at the rear of the main building, dating from the 1950s, is not visible from the front or side elevations.

The Providence Lying-In was founded in 1884 as the fourth hospital in the city of Providence and the first to provide maternity services for patients on a regular basis. Two specific medical cases served to crystallize Dr. Oliver C. Wiggin's idea to establish a maternity facility to meet the need of strangers in the city and those living in boarding houses. In 1883 he was called to attend a woman who had given birth in a horse car. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Wiggin assisted a woman who delivered twins while traveling by train between Boston and Providence. Prior to the hospital's opening, there was no place in the city where a woman, not living in her own home, could have in any measure proper care at confinement.

Together with two other physicians, Dr. Wiggin drew up a constitution and by-laws for the new facility. The Rev. D.H. Greer, rector of Grace Church, assisted with its organization, and Mr. William G. Roelker, a lawyer with prominent connections in the Rhode Island General Assembly, was responsible for the bill of incorporation which passed the Legislature unopposed on February 29, 1884.

By October 1884, Lying-In Hospital's officers and trustees were elected and a constitution and by-laws were adopted. Its mission in the community was stated in Article II of the hospital constitution, was "to provide a place for the confinement of women without the means, and suitable abode at

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bayles, Richard Mather. History of Providence County. New York: W.W. Preston & Co. 1891.

(See Continuation Sheet #9)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property c. 6.35 acres

Quadrangle name Providence

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	9	4	6	3	4	1	5				
Zone		Easting				Northing					

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing					

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The boundary for the Women and Infants' Hospital property coincides with that of the Providence Tax Assessor's Plat 82, Lot 234. This boundary represents the limit of land that encompasses the resource and its immediate setting.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Adams Sheehan, Consultant

organization

date April 3, 1986

street & number 98 Clarke Street

telephone 401-423-2229

city or town Jamestown

state Rhode Island 02835

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Frank C. Williams*

title

date 25 June 1986

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 8-13-86

*for Allene Byer*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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the time of childbirth, and of such other women as may wish, from any cause, to pay a stipulated price for the privileges afforded by a well regulated hospital."

From the start, plans were made for patients to contribute financially when able. In part this was an attempt to remove the stigma from entering a hospital. The intent was to provide a service for all classes of women, not only for the poor. The hospital was supported by contributions.

From 1885 to 1887, the trustees leased the General James estate on Slocum Street which could accommodate a maximum of twelve patients at a time. The first patient was admitted on June 16, 1885. After one year the permanent and visiting staff were enlarged, and after two years the work load had increased to the extent that the board felt the need for a larger facility of its own.

(See Continuation Sheet #3A)



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In 1887 the hospital purchased the Joseph Fletcher estate at the corner of State and Field Streets. The location and building were well suited for their use. The building contained twenty large, well ventilated rooms and was surrounded by a good amount of open space. It accommodated four maternity wards and a delivery room. From 1887 to 1926, while the institution was housed at this location, a series of improvements and additions were made to the property until it was no longer possible to develop the estate to the extent required by the growth of the hospital and its services.

Several important developments occurred during the first fifty years of Lying-In's service. In 1888 a training school for nurses was established. Through its history the school for nurses has offered general and specialized obstetrical training as well as post-graduate work. It was the first hospital in Rhode Island to provide this specialized training. In 1892 the hospital established a department for the care of infants with specialized medical needs. This work was curtailed in 1902 due to financial considerations but was later resumed and continues to provide a unique medical service in the region.

Women and Infants' Hospital has played an important role in the social history of Providence and Rhode Island. The hospital is a manifestation of the social consciousness which was an outgrowth of the great industrial and economic expansion of the nineteenth century. The hospital is significant in Rhode Island in the development of the modern concept of the hospital as an institution devoted to healing and caring for the sick and as a center for research and teaching. This differed substantially from the earlier notion of the hospital as an institution for the needy.

Leonard K. Eaton, in New England Hospitals 1790-1883 (1957), contends that with the growth of economic power comes a greater sense of social obligation and that hospitals could only flourish in an area which was at least moderately urbanized. These contentions would appear to hold true in Providence.

The nineteenth century in Providence was a period of continuous economic, industrial, and population growth. The economy shifted from shipping to industry--including textiles, base metals, jewelry and silverware, the woolen and worsted industry, and weapons manufacture.

Women and Infant's Hospital was established in 1884 to meet the particular medical and social needs of Providence as it became the state's urban and industrial center. Boston was the only other city

(See Continuation Sheet #4)



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in the region at the time with a maternity hospital. It was unusual for a city the size of Providence to provide such a facility.

Throughout the history of the institution, women have played an important role in supporting the hospital's programs. The By-laws were amended in 1893 to establish a Board of Lady Visitors. The organization continues to assist the hospital and is believed to be among the oldest volunteer hospital organization in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The organization's title was changed to the Ladies Auxilliary in 1976. The duties of a Lady Visitor required that she call at the hospital at least once a week and make suggestions concerning the comfort of the patients. In addition to these duties, the Auxilliary has raised large sums of money to meet various needs and building campaigns of the hospital.

In 1913 the Visitors conferred with the Society for Organizing Charity in Providence to discuss the advisability and feasibility of assisting certain patients before admission and after discharge. As a result, a woman social service worker was employed to analyze patients' circumstances through objective case histories that imposed no moral judgement. Herbert Partridge, who first compiled a history of the hospital in 1903, noted that this type of work was a uniquely American contribution to hospital service. The Society for Organizing Charity recognized the importance of the hospital's work in its 1915 Year Book, which said, "The most significant advance in social work during the year must be accorded the Lying-In Hospital."

The role of women in the development of the hospital extends beyond the Board of Lady Visitors and social workers. Two women were elected to the Hospital Board for the first time in 1947; they were the first women appointed to a hospital board in Rhode Island. One of them, Ellen D. Sharpe, was a major benefactor of the hospital during the twentieth century. She purchased the Smith and Maude Streets site for the current hospital facilities and later provided funds for the construction of the Nurses' Home.

Ellen D. Sharpe was the daughter of Lucian and Louise Dexter Sharpe. At the time of her death in 1953 at the age of ninety-two, Miss Sharpe was lauded by the Providence Journal as a "patron of the arts and contributor to many causes."<sup>2</sup> She was personally little known to the community at large, but gifts throughout the city remain her legacy. She was a major benefactor of the Rhode Island School of Design and served on its Board of Directors. She donated generously to the Community Fund

<sup>1</sup> (Providence Journal, 3/13/70:10).

<sup>2</sup> (Providence Journal, 12/30/53:4).

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and Red Cross each year, and was also a major contributor to the fund for the Jane Brown Hospital, named for the widow of her father's business partner, Joseph Brown.

By the early twentieth century the hospital had outgrown its first two locations. Miss Sharpe purchased the present Maude and Smith Streets site which was approved by the Board in 1916. In 1920 the Board decided to proceed with a new building campaign. The Boston architectural firm of Stevens and Lee was selected in 1921.

Edward F. Stevens of Stevens and Lee was principally responsible for the design of the present hospital. Stevens was nationally recognized in the field of hospital design and is particularly noted for three American hospitals, one of which is the Providence Lying-In, according to Withey's Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased).

Stevens took a special course in architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and continued his studies in the offices of Allen and Kenway in Boston, and McKim, Mead & White in New York. His practice after 1907 was limited to designing and equipping more than 150 medical institutions, among the more important Harrisburg Hospital, Pennsylvania; Notre Dame Hospital, Quebec; Quincy Hospital, Massachusetts; and Buffalo General Hospital, New York.

During the first World War, Stevens served as a civilian expert with the Army Corps of Engineers designing hospitals in France, and later was one of a commission of three to reorganize and plan army cantonment hospitals in the United States. A fellow of the American Institute of Architects, he was a delegate of the Institute to the 800th anniversary of the founding of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, England in 1923, on which occasion he was presented with a medal by the Prince of Wales.

Stevens was the author of The American Hospital of the Twentieth Century, a treatise published in 1920 on the development of medical institutions in America and Europe. Up to that time there were only two other recognized American works on the subject: one published in 1875 concerning the plans for Johns Hopkins Hospital and the second in 1909 by Albert Ochsner. By 1920 these books were outdated because of the scientific and technological advances of the times as well as a better understanding and application of medical discoveries in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Mr. Stevens published several articles in architectural journals on hospital plans, including one each in Architectural Record and American Architect which featured Providence Lying-In. Later articles concerned the need for hospital designers to be thoroughly trained and apprenticed in their specialized area of study.

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Stevens' extensive study of American and European hospital plans led to his formulation of the famous "Rigs ward" for which he is noted. The original interior plan of the Providence-Lying-In is an example of this advanced design.

Prior to 1920s, American hospitals had been built primarily in the pavilion format popular since the 1860s. The pavilion plan called for an open ward ventilated on both long sides by windows and on the short sides by doors. Each pavilion was connected to a corridor that served similar pavilions, but was self-contained with its own service rooms.

The "Rigs ward," copied extensively throughout the world, was a Nightingale ward redesigned for more privacy. The Nightingale ward, named after Florence Nightingale, provided efficient care of the patients by reducing the number of beds in each ward and locating the nurses station centrally within the ward. According to John Thompson's description in The Hospital: A Social and Architectural History, the Rigs ward (named for the Rigshospital in Copenhagen) "allowed for more privacy by re-arranging the beds so they set parallel to the windows, two deep on either side of a central aisle, and subdivided by screens in groups of three or four. The screens did not reach the floor or ceiling so that air could circulate freely. One private room intended for medical reasons was walled off in the center of the room opposite the nurses' room."<sup>3</sup>

Stevens designed a pavilion combining private rooms and wards, greatly augmenting the proportion of private rooms. According to Thompson, "whereas in the Rigshospital there are twenty-six beds in groups of three or four to one single bed in the separation room, in Steven's pavilion there are twelve one-bed rooms to four rooms of three beds each."<sup>4</sup>

The block plan for the Providence Lying-In Hospital includes this larger proportion of private rooms. No ward was designed to hold more than six beds, affording patients in them a degree of privacy and individual care. This design was indicative of the twentieth-century trend towards greater privacy in hospital facilities.

Stevens set down general specifications in 1921 for the exterior design of hospitals based on the philosophy prevalent since the mid-

<sup>3</sup> Thompson, pp. 215-216.

<sup>4</sup> Thompson, p. 216.

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nineteenth century that the "improvement of the patient, which is the fundamental purpose of the institution, depends in large measure on its situation and environment - the contour of the land, the surrounding country, the accessibility for friends, etc."<sup>5</sup>

The Providence Lying-in property in the Elmhurst neighborhood of the city met Stevens' site requirements. Elmhurst evolved from an eighteenth-century farm area, through a period of rural retreats from the city, to turn-of-the-century tract development beyond the tenements of Smith Hill. The area afforded the land required for such an institution and was easily accessible to the rest of the city by roads and trolley. Throughout this neighborhood other institutions were taking similar advantage of large tracts of available land. Providence College (1917) purchased approximately forty-six acres. In 1924 LaSalle Academy purchased forty-three acres on Smith Street and moved from its downtown Providence location. On the opposite side of the Pleasant Valley Parkway from Providence Lying-In, the Homeopathic Hospital of R.I. was built in 1926.

"The location," as described by Stevens, "on a broad plateau overlooking the park suggested the type of architecture and the plan was developed for the site. The natural contour of the land was made to add to the effectiveness of the design."<sup>6</sup> The road pattern with large shade trees which curves around the building and the circular entrance drive acted as an extension of the park space to the southwest.

Stevens believed that hospital buildings should be simple but designed to make a pleasing impression and that the immediate environment should play a large part in determining the specific type of architecture for an institution. When located in a city, a "stately motif should be employed." Furthermore, medical institutions should express cheerfulness and should inspire their "guests with confidence and courage, for after all, the psychology of first impressions upon entering an institution, often largely influence the success of an operation or the treatment of a patient." Stevens believed that the "Collegiate Gothic" style of architecture was in keeping with the dignity of the building's use.

<sup>5</sup> Stevens, American Hospital of the Twentieth Century. p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Stevens, "Providence Maternity Hospital," Architectural Record, Jan. - June, 1922, Volume 51, p. 171.

<sup>7</sup> Stevens, "What the Past Fifteen Years Have Taught Us in Hospital Construction and Design," American Architect, Dec. 5, 1927, Volume 132, p. 705.

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Walter C. Kidney states in The Architecture of Choice: Eclecticism in America 1880-1930, "that the Gothic style had long been acceptable for religious buildings and by 1915 was a well established style for educational institutions.... As the form of hospitals evolved from low buildings where the classical forms were appropriate to towering blocks, the Gothic details which fit the vertical forms became more common."<sup>8</sup>

The Providence Journal described the building as one "that captivates the eye. A long structure, four stories high, it curves along the brow of the eminence on which it lies. A tower rising at the center, gable roof, and general plan of construction remind one for all the world of a college dormitory - exactly the impression intended."<sup>9</sup>

On visiting the new hospital, Professor Barton Cooke Hirst of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, a world famous obstetrician who had seen maternity hospitals throughout the world, said, "I have yet to see the equal of the new Providence Lying-In Hospital."<sup>10</sup> At the dedication ceremonies, Dr. Franklin S. Newell, Professor of Obstetrics at the Harvard Medical School, confirmed Hirst's observation.

Wallis E. Howe, a prominent architect from Bristol, Rhode Island, was the designer of the Nurses' Home addition in 1933. The scale and composition of the design is in keeping with Stevens' buildings.

<sup>8</sup> Kidney, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> Providence Journal, 12/12/26, F:5.

<sup>10</sup> Providence Journal, 12/14/26:4.



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(See Continuation Sheet #10)

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