

Way We Were  
May 13, 2015  
Mahala Ruddell, Research coordinator  
Hospital Day

Thank you for joining us for the last installment in a series of articles about the names and faces behind the everyday functionality of the old Miners Hospital.

We looked at Isabel Grant, one of the first matrons, then at her successors up to the closing of the hospital in 1919. Today we look at the following era in the hospital's history. And, in celebration of National Hospital Week, we'll pay particular attention to the celebration of Hospital Day.

When Margaret Clarke stepped onto the scene in 1922, the Miners Hospital had been closed for years. Financial difficulties, in part caused by the labor disputes and strike of 1919, had forced the hospital to close. Margaret Clarke had worked for the hospital when it was open, and had, since its closure, been running a maternity hospital from her home. In 1922, she bought the Miners Hospital and reopened it to once again serve Park City.

Clarke began annual Hospital Day festivities soon thereafter to foster a sense of community and understanding of the services offered by the hospital. First celebrated in Chicago in 1921, Hospital Day was founded as a day to promote trust, honor hospital staff, and celebrate community. By the mid-1920s, it was observed regularly throughout the country. May 12<sup>th</sup> was chosen as the day of observance in honor of Florence Nightingale, the famed English nurse and social reformer, born May 12, 1820.

In Park City, Margaret Clarke led the Hospital Day festivities which usually included tours and demonstrations at the hospital, and an evening of light refreshments, musical performances, and lectures given by doctors. According to the *Park Record*, it was always a huge success. One of the most special events of the day was the annual tradition of taking a photo of all the mothers with babies born at the hospital during the previous year. Each child present was gifted a silver dollar by Clarke and the hospital staff.

Hospital Day was celebrated in Park City nearly every year from 1922 through the 1940s, with Margaret Clarke the mover and shaker behind the tradition. The 1940s saw the decline of festivities, as well as the beginning of the decline for the hospital itself. Though kept open and functional until the 1960s by Lennie Schlup, patient numbers and funding dwindled and the hospital eventually once again was forced to close its doors.

May 12<sup>th</sup> is now celebrated as International Nurses Day and May 10-16<sup>th</sup> is officially recognized in the United States as National Hospital Week. Please join us in thanking the nurses, midwives, doctors, technicians, administrators, volunteers, and countless others who endlessly work for the betterment of their communities.



Image ID: 1996.31.1

Credit: Park City Historical Society and Museum, Robert Reese Collection

Caption: Nurses, mothers, and babies gather to take the annual photo of those born at the hospital over the previous year. This photo was taken circa 1928. Nurse Margaret Clarke is seated on the far right. Others in the image are identified as Emma Thompson Peterson, Nurse Jane Durrant Bolton, Madeline C. Langford, Wave Peterson Jones, Ansta Watson James, and Nurse Jones.

Sources:

*Park Record*, May 9, 1924; May 8, 15, and 22, 1925; May 7 and 14, 1926; June 3 and 10, 1927; May 11, 1928; May 16, 1940; June 11, 1942.