



[graphic]

HOW IT WAS . . .

The LODGE -- part I

Harding Hospital's 1990 Christmas card features a building that no longer exists on the campus. However, from 1919 until the Spring of 1981, the Lodge was the heart and hub of Harding Hospital. The photograph on the card was taken of the Lodge's last Christmas season. Lighted in every window, full of color and warmth, this grand old building stood its ground with dignity and beauty, like the architectural matriarch it was.

The Lodge was the main building on the old summer estate. When Dr. Harding and his friends acquired the property, the Lodge was destined to be the residence for patients. For all its beauty, the building had been intended for summer occupancy only, and much work needed to be done to make it winter-worthy. An account by young Warren Harding (II) tells how he



and his brother George (III) huddled around a potbellied stove while snow blew in around the windows. Their task was to dig a basement under the house so that central heating could be installed. Eventually the business manager, Mr. D. K. Nicola, was able to acquire the boiler from a fire truck and that became the basis for a steam heating system.

Almost as soon as the Columbus Rural Rest Home became established in Worthington, a Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized. As a self-supporting medical mission of the Adventist Church, the Rest Home was staffed mainly with Adventist workers. They and their families felt the need for a church. The congregation was organized on July 17, 1920, with 24 members. Church services were held in the Lodge parlor for many years until the present church on Griswold Street was built. Music was provided by the Nicola family orchestra. Young Wellington Nicola grew up to be an architect, and one of his first professional projects was Westover, built in 1926. His last project was the addition to Oakmont, which doubled the old building's site and made it usable for the Day Treatment program.



The Lodge parlor was used for many things. It was the dining room for patients. In the old days, meals were announced by a white-jacketed steward bonging on a melodious set of chimes. In later years, as the number of patients increased, food was provided cafeteria-style, but patients still ate their meals in the quiet parlor. In the evenings it was a pleasant place to sit and talk, socialize or read. There was a fireplace at one end, outlined in green tile, with a design of black wrought iron. The many large windows and double french doors leading out onto the broad porch gave it an open airy look.

Educational programs, medical staff meetings, public gatherings, arts and crafts shows, employee parties, vesper services -- all manner of gatherings took place in the Lodge parlor. It was an auditorium, chapel, conference room, dining room, exhibit hall and a place to receive guests. Its beauty, comfort, usefulness and openness made tangible the spirit of the institution.

by Ellie Jones