May 13, 2020

Hi Jim,

It occurred to me that since you were born in the Ohio Valley Hospital that a little background would be helpful to you.  The hospital was built starting in 1912 and Tutu, aged 3, was the youngest to give a donation.  Little Miss Katharine Sinclair with her brother Dohrman presented $1,000 for a children's ward.  Of course, her father spearheaded getting the money to build the hospital so it would make sense that he along with all his family contributed.  The story goes that he was asked to be chairman of the fund drive with a set goal of $100,000 to be raised in six days.  He accepted on the basis that the hospital would be open to all.  One of the group said that when Sinclair invited people to form teams to help the community it was accepted almost as a command.  The Opera House had the stage extended and a dinner was set for 200 workers the night before the drive.  The next morning church bells rang, trains whistled, and school bells sounded.  Six days later they gathered in the Opera House for the reporting.  The ladies’ teams raised $33,921.10 which included Mary Sinclair, D.J. Sinclair's wife as the head of one of the teams.  The men's teams raised $29,237.79 and then the companies reported bringing the grand total to $134,249 which eventually ended up at $135,000.  Your great grandfather was presented with a handsome loving cup inscribed with his name and "presented by 200 workers in the hospital campaign."

Until the hospital was built a place was needed and Sinclair who owned the Lacy Hotel at High & Market Streets between the stations of the Wheeling and Lake Erie and Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroads offered its use.  He spent $5,000 of his own funds getting it ready to be a hospital.  This was used until 1917.  In October 1912 D.J. Sinclair was the 41st patient there on the 25th when after an automobile accident where his upper right arm had been shattered, doctors from Johns Hopkins in Baltimore and George L. Hays from Pittsburgh arrived by train to make an incision through the fibers of the deltoid muscle of the right shoulder, removing the head and fragments of bone and trimming up the shaft of the humerus.  Afterward he could move his arm, just not vertical.  He again used the hospital in 1914 when he was near death from a bullet wound inflicted by a demented man whose condition previously had been accepted as harmless.  He survived but the bullet remained in his body.

The spot for the new hospital had to be decided and after meetings of the board when no decision was made, the City Council was asked for their opinion.  Finally, on March 6, 1913 the trustees agreed that the corner of S. 4th Street and Slacks Street across from the Carnegie Library was the best offered.  A building committee was elected with Dohrman Sinclair as a member.  He agreed with Dr. Floyd in the belief that at least five acres were needed, and that the present spot did not meet that criteria.  Pleasant Heights was being developed and the Wells sisters had property there which offered a view of four or five miles up and down the valley on a clear day.  Sinclair pointed to the streetcar line that passed up the hill nearby. He believed the houses being build would soon occupy an area almost as large as the downtown area.  Objections were raised that the distance from the mills to the hilltop, over streets, up a steep hill would take too long.  The time issue was settled when an undertaker-livery stable owner hitched a fast team to his hearse and left the mill gate, up Adams hill to Wells Manor in about the same time it took to get to Lacy Hotel.  The 11 acres were bought for $15,000 in April 1913.  The following year on May 25th Mr. Sinclair purchased 5 more acres which he donated to the hospital association.

With land secured plans needed to be drawn.    Peterson and Clark of Steubenville were hired as architects and Meyer J. Sturm of Chicago was called in to be the consulting architect.  The plans that Mr. Sturm presented had the appearance that the hospital was cramped for space.  Sinclair drew a rough sketch of the hospital as it is now, with an abundance of light and air in every room.  Strum took it to Chicago to give it detail.  Dohrman said, "It needed some because I had drawn it on the head of a barrel in Bart Wheaton's store."  August 6, 1915, a week after he had turned 55 Sinclair was struck down by a train in the LaBelle Iron Works and died within minutes.

June 3, 1917 patients from the Lacy Hotel were moved into the new hospital.  The hospital was open to all.

Dr. Howard C. Minor from Toronto had set up his office in Steubenville in the Sinclair Building where he was practicing medicine.  He later built a home a block from the new hospital on Lawson Avenue where his son returned after medical school and his internship in Pittsburgh.  Young Howard went on to marry that little Miss Katharine Sinclair.

Dr. Howard H. Minor spent the day at the hospital when a bus went out of control going down Weirton Heights hill and crashed on April 29,1951.  There were fifty-two victims admitted to the hospital and Dr. Minor was very busy preforming many surgeries.

Doc as he was called was asked to head up the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel medical department of the Steubenville, Mingo, and Follansbee coke plants which was located where the LaBelle Iron Works had existed. It was right down Adams Street hill from the hospital and Lawson Avenue where the Minors lived.  During the over three feet of snow in 1950, transportation prevented many doctors getting to the hospital, but Dr. Minor would trudge through the snow to serve the patients.

Dr. Minor was President of the Medical Staff of the Ohio Valley Hospital in 1952, 1960, and 1967.  His Son-in-Law Bob Evans worked the summer of 1959 on building the hospital addition. The next year with the hospital addition completed his daughter, Mary Minor Evans, gave birth to his second grandson James Robert Evans in the hospital.  There is a long family relationship with the hospital.  One last connection was that on July 23, 1998 Katharine Sinclair Minor died in the Ohio Valley Hospital.

Mary Minor Evans

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