

CORRESPONDENCE

Anesthesiology
80:710, 1994
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In Reply:—Sechzer notes that Metropolitan Hospital was on Welfare (or Roosevelt) Island. This is, of course, true, but the beginnings of that institution were at another site.

Ward's Island was so named in 1806 when Jasper and Bartholemew Ward bought it from the British, who knew it as Buchanan's Island. In 1867, a large and ornate structure for the Inebriate Asylum was erected on the highest ground of the island. This building was set aside on August 7th, 1875 for use by the homeopathic profession. The hospital was staffed from the "Flower" hospital, which was later to combine with the New York Medical College.

On March 26th, 1894, the Ward's Island Hospital ceased to exist, and the patients and equipment were transferred to Blackwell's Island. Blackwell's Island had been named for Robert Blackwell, who received the island on October 10th, 1665 on his marriage to the stepdaughter of the owner, Captain John Manning. The name of the island was changed to Welfare Island in 1920.

The homeopathic appellation caused some concern. The following letter¹ was drafted to establish more firmly the purpose of the hospital and to identify the population that it served:

New York, March 30, 1894

Alfred K. Hills, M.D., Secretary, Medical Board:

Sir: I transmit the following proceeding of the Board of Commissioners of Public Charities and Correction, at a meeting held this day:

Whereas, the institution formerly known as the Homeopathic Hospital, and latterly as the Ward's Island Hospital, has been removed from Ward's Island to Blackwell's Island, to the building formerly known as the New York City Asylum for the Insane, which institution has been removed to Ward's Island, therefore, be it

Resolved, that in future the hospital be named and known as the Metropolitan Hospital.

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In Reply:—My thanks to Sechzer for his correction and amplification of the positions held by Dr. Rovenstine while he was in New York City.

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Resolved, that the Medical Board of the hospital and heads of other institutions and bureaus of the department be notified of the above change of name. For the balance of this year, this hospital must be known as the Metropolitan Hospital, formerly the Ward's Island Hospital.

By order,
Arthur Phillips
Assistant Secretary

It is hardly surprising that with so many name and site changes, some confusion might arise. However, there seems little doubt that, as I noted, Ward's Island Homeopathic Hospital formed the basis of the philosophy, personnel, management, patients, and equipment of Metropolitan Hospital. The current site of the hospital, as Sechzer notes, is in Manhattan at 1st Avenue and East 97th Street. The Department of Anesthesia, situated on the 12th floor, enjoys a magnificent and unobstructed view of the East River.

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Reference

1. Wershub LP: One Hundred Years of Medical Progress: A History of the New York Medical College, Flower and Fifth Avenue Hospitals. Springfield, Charles C Thomas, 1967, pp 110–115, 121–124

(Accepted for publication November 29, 1993.)

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(Accepted for publication November 29, 1993.)