

HISTORY OF THE BOULDER COUNTY POOR FARM AND HOSPITAL
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Early records from Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meetings are filled with references to the county's pauper and lunatic population. From 1871 to 1874, the commissioners spent considerable time on issues pertaining to their custodial care. With no official county physician, responsibility for the indigent fell entirely on their shoulders. At almost every session, they considered bills from citizens asking to be reimbursed for medicines, room-and-board, even disposition of bodies of the lunatic poor. The county provided financial support through a special fund, although those who were physically able worked for their keep at the location where they boarded. The Board offset a portion of Edwin Thompson's expenses by ordering the sale of his horse. That transaction netted the county only \$35.00, however.¹

Care of inmates during the 1870s was minimal, tending only to their basic needs for clothing, food, shelter, and medicine. Psychiatric treatment was not locally available and Colorado had no insane asylum until 1879.

Whenever possible, funds for inmate expenses were reimbursed through probate court action against relatives and estates.² But in cases of lunacy judgments where no relatives or friends accepted responsibility, confinement in the county jail could be ordered until arrangements were made with the nearest "lunatic asylum". In the 1870s, Boulder County sent their psychiatric patients to the Oak Lawn Retreat in Jacksonville, Illinois. There, custodial care cost \$3 per week plus \$5 for meals.³ Added to that expense was train fare for the patient and a physician assigned to accompany him.⁴

As more and more items filled the commissioners' dockets, it was deemed advisable to assign lunatic pauper issues to a member of the medical profession. Therefore, in January 1874, bids were accepted for the position of county physician. All applicants were required to be regular practitioners and graduates of a medical college. Duties included doctoring the paupers of the county, keeping records of all prescriptions written, and the delivery of periodic reports to the Board.⁵ In February, the BOCC appointed Dr. Charles Ambrook, a Boulder physician, for a period of one year. Ambrook, in his application, had promised "to doctor the paupers of the County of Boulder, Colorado Territory for the space of one year...for the sum of \$397.49," and to furnish his own medicines.⁶ The Board generously rounded his salary to \$400 plus a quarterly reimbursement for drugs dispensed under his care. He was allowed to continue his private medical practice in Boulder but was on call for emergencies as well as routine visits to county inmates.

Some prestige must have accompanied the job, for when bids were submitted the following year, Dr. Henley W. Allen offered to work for only \$50 a year. His bid was rejected by the Board even though his father, Alexander P. Allen was a county commissioner at the time. Dr. Ambrook was retained and continued to serve the county for a total of nine years.⁷

Having established the position of county physician, further mention of lunatic paupers in BOCC proceedings was limited to determining eligibility for financial support or assigning patients to the Jacksonville asylum. Bills continued to be presented in great numbers, however, by local care givers seeking reimbursement.

Arranging housing for paupers and patients in local hotels and boarding houses was one of Ambrook's more challenging responsibilities. Costly custodial fees plus difficulty in finding landlords willing to accept the more severe cases of mental illness, contributed to the following Board action:

October 5, 1875

Resolved that Charles Ambrook, County Physician, be instructed to procure a house in Boulder suitable for a Poor House and furnish the same with such household goods as may be necessary and take charge of the same and certify to all bills.

This matter must have been attended to immediately because records show that on the very next day, rent for a house on Water Street was paid to W.J. Havenstein at a cost of \$15 per month.⁸ Havenstein's house consisted of a garret room upstairs and four rooms on the ground floor. Ambrook furnished it with "cheap, yet good" furniture: three 3/4-beds and two double beds in the five rooms.⁹ The facility opened its doors to the first occupants on October 9, and bills for its operation began appearing in Board proceedings almost immediately:¹⁰

Holstein and Herman, merchandise...	\$36.24
F.A. Leonard, coal.....	8.45
C. Boetcher, merchandise.....	41.53
P.S. Squires, expressage.....	7.53
D. McGinness, furniture.....	35.00
R.B. Potter, bread.....	9.30

In his 1876 annual report to the BOCC, Dr. Ambrook described attending to cases of consumption and paralysis as well as destitution and insanity, as if all inmates were similarly cared for.¹¹ However, dissociated bills for a hospital and a poorhouse began to appear that same month. The separation of operations for the two facilities had occurred at some time between October 1875 and March 1876,

although no specific action is mentioned in Board proceedings.

In August 1876, Commissioner Alexander P. Allen was authorized to arrange a year's lease on a building in Valmont, suitable to house the county's paupers. The two buildings that he obtained belonged to his son, Dr. Henley Allen, with whom he had platted the town of Valmont eleven years before. Dr. Allen's rent for the buildings was \$15 a month...payable in advance.¹²

That same month, the plight of Mrs. S.J. Johnson came to the Board's attention. After having been declared insane, her husband now refused to care for her. With Dr. Ambrook apparently out of town and unable to admit her to the county hospital, the commissioners ordered Mrs. Johnson to jail, "there to remain until the next meeting of the Board unless sooner discharged by the county physician..."¹³ Mercifully, at the next Board meeting Dr. Ambrook was authorized to admit her to the hospital for treatment.

By 1877, Dr. Ambrook's duties had increased although his annual salary had not. For \$400, he was required to care for the sick in the poorhouse, the county hospital, and the jail, plus attend to any paupers in the county living outside of those institutions. He was also expected to be general supervisor for the poorhouse and hospital.¹⁴ Compounding the stress of this heavy work load, Ambrook was confronted by a group of angry citizens demanding his removal as county physician. After a hearing, however, the Board dismissed the matter.¹⁵

In October, Dr. Ambrook was asked to locate another building in Boulder suitable for a poorhouse and hospital. Although its location was never specified in BOCC proceedings, monthly rental payments of \$20 to real estate agent John A. Ellet began the following month.¹⁶

In 1878, Dr. Ambrook's position was challenged by the Boulder County Medical Society who offered to take over the pauper practice at no charge. The BOCC rejected their offer for unknown reasons and rehired Ambrook for a fifth year.¹⁷ One of his first duties upon reappointment was to convert to hospital use the portion of the county courthouse that had previously served as the sheriff's residence. This action was strongly opposed by a citizens group who petitioned against it. The BOCC hastily withdrew their plan and instructed Ambrook to rent another building at a cost not to exceed \$15 per month. The Grout House was subsequently obtained although its address is unknown.¹⁸ Improvements to make that building fully functional as a county facility included installation of a privy, a fence, and a municipal water supply.¹⁹

In October, the BCCC received notice of a new insane asylum in Manitou Springs, Colorado. They immediately authorized the county clerk to write for information concerning admission costs and terms.²⁰ Finding those terms unsatisfactory, however, the county continued to send its lunatic patients to Oak Lawn Retreat in Illinois.

Martin Hanson had the dubious distinction in 1880, of being the first "insane pauper" from Boulder County admitted to the new Colorado asylum in Pueblo.²¹ The availability of this instate facility resulted in considerable savings to the county until 1882, when the state auditor notified the BCCC of a problem. Although \$508 had been earmarked for Boulder County patients, the Legislature had failed to appropriate the needed funds for the care of its insane paupers.²² According to later county financial records, however, future operating funds for the asylum were assured through a statewide 1/5 mill levy assessment.²³

In 1881, after years of moving county inmates from place to place, the BCCC took the first step toward purchasing land for a poorhouse and hospital. Commissioner George Young was instructed to advertise for suitable property. He received offers from eighteen individuals and ultimately recommended to the Board a 40-acre parcel belonging to Clinton M. Tyler.²⁴ The property was described legally as the SW quarter of the SE quarter of Section 31; T 1N; R 70W. The Samuel Freeze map of 1881 shows this parcel bordering the north side of Baseline Road.²⁵ On today's city map, the area is bordered by 16th and 20th Streets, between Aurora and Baseline Avenues. Clinton Tyler, a prominent Boulder citizen, offered his land to the county for \$1000 which, according to the Boulder County Herald, was well below the current market price of \$50 per acre.²⁶ The property lay south of the University grounds and according to the Boulder County Herald, future operations might someday include medical instruction for university students at the facility.²⁷

The commissioners appropriated \$1000 to purchase the property and prepared to solicit construction bids the following spring.²⁸ The proposed facility was to resemble a United States Army post hospital with the administrative portion erected first and patient wings added as needed.²⁹ The bidding was postponed, however, when representatives of the Board of Trade and a newly elected Board of Commissioners disagreed about building on the proposed site. The problem seemed to focus on the size of the parcel. The original Board of Commissioners had favored a large tract of land so that the facility could be built in the center, thereby sparing neighbors the annoyance of an institution in their midst. Apparently the new Board reasoned that reliance on inmates to work such a large parcel was an expensive luxury, and hiring outside laborers was impossible since able men "would sooner go into the mountains" to find work. The

commissioners agreed to wait while the Board of Trade searched for more suitable grounds.³⁰ Apparently no other land was found, because within the year, construction bids were finally solicited for a county hospital on the Tyler property.³¹ The fact that none of the resulting bids were accepted may perhaps be explained by the fact that construction was also underway for a new county courthouse. County resources may have been too strained to undertake another major building project at that time, so commissioner Young was instructed to have a small frame house built on the property instead.³²

In 1882, Dr. Ambrook's private practice suffered during his prolonged involvement with a smallpox outbreak at the county hospital. The Board compensated his financial loss with a salary increase of \$200.³³ Shortly thereafter, Ambrook was replaced as county physician by Dr. R.G. Floyd whose annual salary was immediately lowered to \$333. Dr. Floyd remained for two years before being replaced in 1885, by Dr. Horace O. Dodge, an instructor at the university medical school.

In 1888, fire swept through the county hospital destroying all its contents but miraculously sparing the four patients interned there. The commissioners quickly found temporary quarters for the displaced inmates in the Martin house on 19th Street.³⁴ Again, insufficient county funds postponed attempts to build a new county hospital, so the BOCC contracted with George Walker to rent his buildings and grounds near the Sternberg Flour Mill for \$200 a year.³⁵ Soon after, the burned-out poor farm was advertised for sale and the search began for a larger piece of property. Lack of interest in the old poor farm property resulted in reducing the asking price of \$1300. It was on the market for eighteen months before Mary E. Arnett purchased it for \$1100.³⁶

In 1890, the county paid \$4000 for property on 22nd Street, south of the Base Line, belonging to Boulder County Clerk and Recorder, Thomas Danforth. A large brick building to house the inmates was constructed, this time protected by ample fire insurance.³⁷

Once again, the poor farm complex was in close proximity to the university. This time, an agreement was reached allowing medical students access to the hospital for "clinical purposes" under the supervision of county physician, Dr. Ruel Bartlett.³⁸ A superintendent now managed the farm complex itself.³⁹

Telephone service had been available in Boulder since 1881, and for the first time, a phone was installed at the county facility for \$5 per month.⁴⁰ It was ordered removed three years later...no reason given.⁴¹

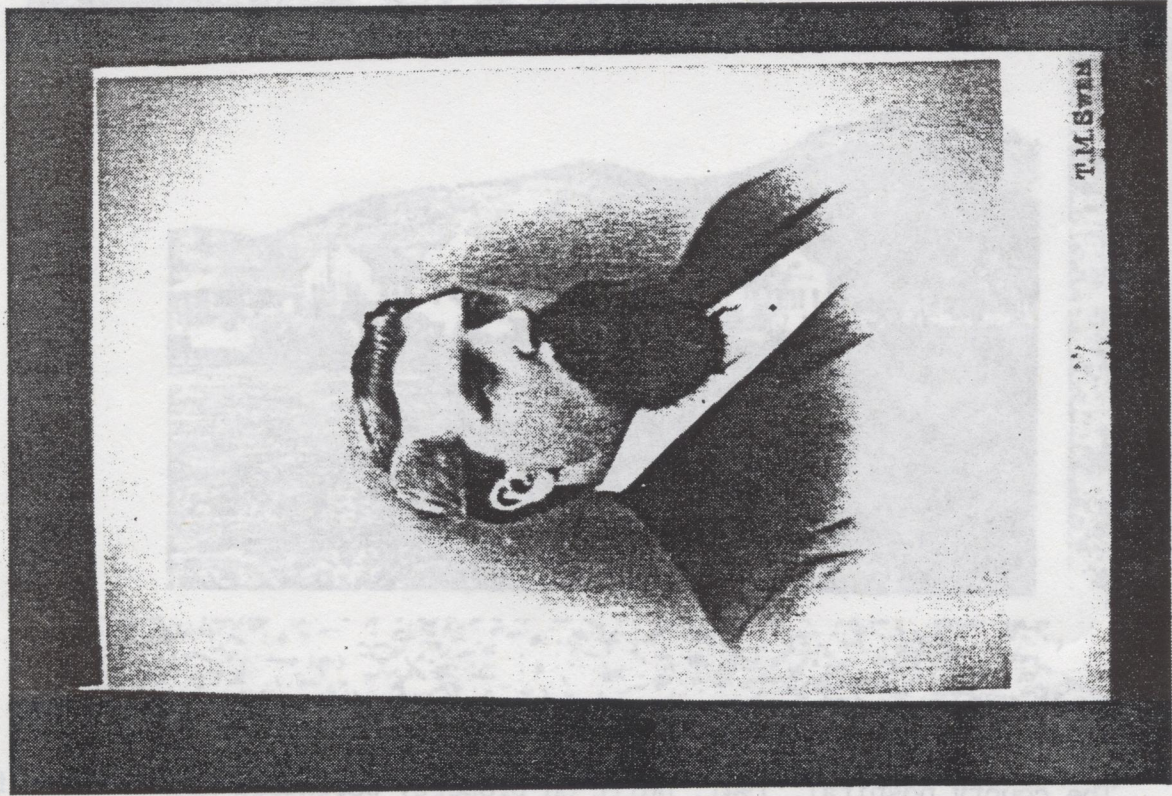
After eleven years, discussions began once again about relocating the county farm, this time to larger facilities outside of Boulder. Wilbur F. Kiploy, representing the Colorado Osteopathic Sanitarium, purchased the 22nd Street property and three shares of the Anderson Ditch for \$15,000.⁴² Newspaper accounts described the proposed sanitarium as follows:

Boulder will probably soon have another new institution. The Colorado Osteopathic Sanitarium Company has an option on the county poor farm at \$15,000 and it is said the money has almost been raised. The idea is to establish a sanitarium, and cottages will be erected for patients. They will be treated by the osteopathic system and will live an outdoor life as much as possible. It is claimed that there will be 500 patients here the first year.⁴³

The Sanitarium Company took possession on February 1, 1902, and a warranty deed was issued on December 1, 1903. After an initial payment of \$3000, three annual installments were to follow at 6% interest. According to historian Jane Barker, however, their financing failed and in 1904 the county resold the property to David Dobbins, a former employee of the county treasurer's office.⁴⁴

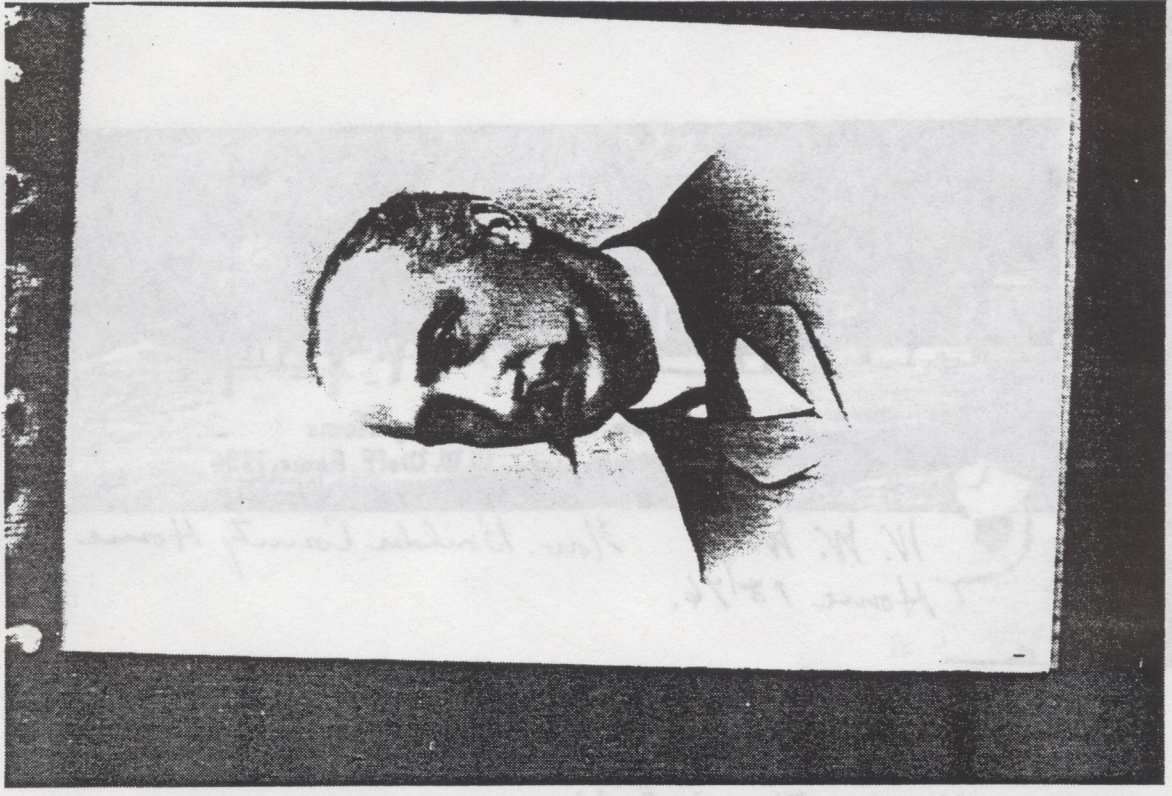
Meanwhile, the commissioners had purchased 120 acres of land north of Valmont from Lucy A. Williams. The total purchase price was \$14,000; \$6000 in cash to Ms. Williams, and \$8000 in deferred payments to the John T. Williams Trust. The property was described legally as the South 1/2 of the SW 1/4 of Section 14, and the NE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 23, T1N, R70W of the 6th P.M., together with all water and ditch rights and 1 1/2 shares of stock in the North Boulder Farmers Ditch.⁴⁵

Although a large brick home already stood on the property, modifications were needed to convert it to an institution. According to Mary Hummel Wells whose father Paul Hummel purchased the property in 1920, the cellar was remodeled into a kitchen. A dumbwaiter transported meals to an upstairs apartment at the rear of the main house, presumably for the superintendent's family. The inmates ate in a dining area at the west end of the cellar.⁴⁶



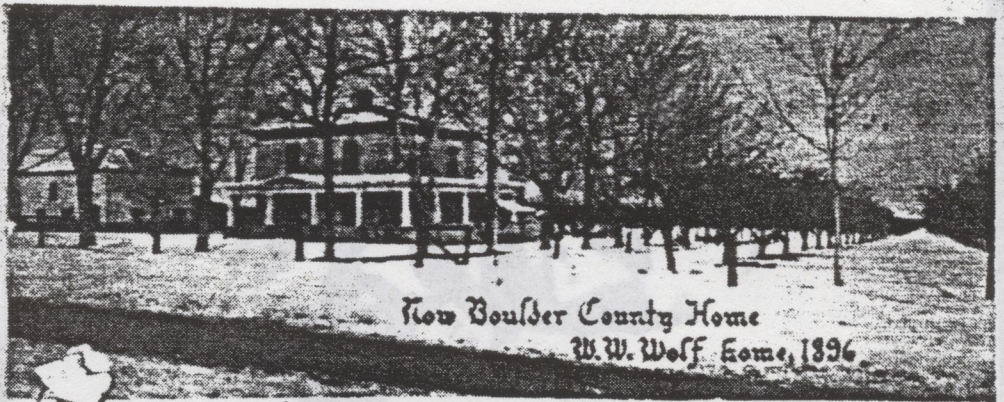
John A. Ellet. Handled real estate transactions for the Board in the 1870s. Ellet was mayor of Boulder in 1880-81 and 1882-83.

Photo: Gladden collection, Historic Boulder.



Dr. H.O. Dodge became county physician from 1885 to 1889. He was also an instructor at the university medical school in Boulder.

Photo: Gladden collection, Historic Boulder.



W. W. Wolf Home 1896. How. Boulder County Home

William W. Wolf home on North Broadway, in 1896. Property was purchased by the county in 1918 for the county poor farm. Note the orchards to the right of the home.

Gladden collection, Historic Boulder.



The county hospital, 1941, built on property purchased from W.W. Wolf. Photo: Gladden collection, Historic Boulder.



County Poor Farm building at 3902 North 63rd Street, ca 1920. Photo was taken shortly after the property was sold to William A. Smith. The two-story dormitory annex can be seen to the extreme right of the house. The annex was later removed.

Photo" Mary Hummel Wells collection.





Dr. Charles Ambrook, first
county physician; 1874-1883.

Gladden collection, Historic
Boulder.



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A two-story dormitory wing was added to the house in 1904, and a photograph showing that annex is included with this report.⁴⁷ In an interview, Mary Wells recalled playing in the huge empty annex:

I still have the doors. They're fantastic. On the ground floor there were great huge iron doors with great big square locks. I assume that's where they put the crazy people, I don't know. I had a great time playing in there, but it all came to a halt when Dad tore it down.

By 1918, the 120-acre poor farm had become burdensome to the county and more modern facilities were needed. Whether the practice of inmate labor to work the farm land was no longer a viable concept, or whether the basic patient profile had changed, records do not show. But in February, a 20-acre site was purchased from W.W. Wolf on Ninth Avenue and Twelfth Street (now 3400 North Broadway) in Boulder, and the Valmont property was sold that fall.⁴⁸ William A. Smith purchased the Valmont farm for \$26,000 and Mr. Wolf priced his property with water rights at \$9500, less than half of its market value. For the second time in county poor farm history, a civic-minded citizen had offered property at considerable savings "through public-spirited interest in the county's dependent population." Wolf had lived on the property for twenty-seven years and his improvements included several acres of apple trees, a barn, and a home shaded by large maple trees.

The legal description of the Wolf property was described as the S 1/2 of the SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 19, T1N, R70W, together with two ten-acre water rights, each representing the right to use of .18 of a cubic foot of water per second from and through Silver Lake Ditch.⁴⁹

Boulder architect A.E. Saunders was hired to remodel the existing buildings on the property and to design a new sanitarium on the site.⁵⁰ Bids for its construction were let and the BOCC accepted the lowest bid of \$46,412.75, submitted by G.A. Beranson. City Plumbing and Heating Company installed the utilities for \$12,800, and a contract to rewire the existing home went to Terry and Goodnow for \$140.00.⁵¹ According to an oral history tape recorded by William Wolf in 1985, a 100-foot addition was built onto the existing house for a surgical hospital for poor farm residents and indigent out-patients.⁵²

As soon as all the necessary work was completed, twenty inmates from the old county farm and ten indigent patients from area hospitals were moved to their new quarters.⁵³

Forest Crossen described the home as an attractive Spanish style building.

The lobby was big and spacious,
in its center a wide brick fireplace.
Around it in easy chairs sat old
fellows smoking and talking away
the hours.⁵⁵

Soon after opening, the Boulder Fire Department noted that the nearest fire hydrant was more than 1400 feet away from the building. In the event of a blaze requiring more than chemical extinguishers, they feared it would be impossible to sustain enough water pressure with a hose that length. Having already lost one poorhouse from fire, it was decided to accept the advice of Boulder's city manager, and a new fire hydrant was installed in front of the facility.⁵⁵

The county home was situated on the west edge of the Boulder Oil Field, which in the 1920s was the center of considerable exploratory activity. A sea of oil derricks belonging to many small oil companies stretched from Jay Road to Niwot and west to the foothills. In March 1927, the county leased the county home's mineral rights to Bert W. Strickland for \$1 an acre. The three-year lease promised an 1/8 royalty to the county should oil be found.⁵⁶

At some point, the North Broadway facility was renamed Boulder County General Hospital. By 1962 it housed only eight patients so a hospital survey committee was formed to conduct a feasibility study. Following its recommendation, the commissioners voted on August 13, 1962, to close the hospital down. They then proceeded to contract with Boulder Community Hospital, Boulder Memorial Hospital, Longmont Community Hospital and Longs Peak Osteopathic Hospital to care for future indigent cases.⁵⁷ It is assumed that the county hospital remained open through December 1962, because the county physician was retained until January 1, 1963 "to take care of the out-patient clinic and to make calls at the Boulder County General Hospital."⁵⁸

The last few months of 1962 were spent contracting with various organizations to use portions of the building after the hospital closed. Included were the Navy Recruiting Office⁵⁹, the Civil Air Patrol⁶⁰, and the Mental Health Clinic.⁶¹ Sterling Heights Nursing Home bought the hospital equipment for \$1,450, plus the 228 bedding sheets for an additional \$150.⁶²

According to William W. Wolf's tape, the original house and its addition were torn down in 1980.⁶³ Thus, the last remaining poor farm structure in existence in 1992 is the brick house at 3902 North 63rd Street, north of Valmont Road, which is once again a private home.

APPENDIX

COUNTY PHYSICIANS
(Incomplete)

1874-1882: Dr. Charles Ambrook

1883-1884: Dr. R. G. Floyd

1885-1888: Dr. Horace O. Dodge

1889 (Jan): Dr. R. N. Mayfield

(May): Dr. H. W. Allen

Dr. T. J. Ross (Longmont vicinity)

1890: Dr. Ruel Bartlett

1893: Dr. F. A. Shute

1895-1897: Dr. L. Z. Coman

1903: Dr. George H. Cattermole

1908: Dr. E. B. Trovillion

1918: Dr. Jacob Campbell

1962: Dr. Rosenberg

END NOTES

1. Board of Commissioners proceedings, September 9, 1875.
2. Ibid., November 17, 1875.
3. Ibid., March 7, 1876.
4. Ibid., May 3, 1875.
5. Ibid., January 10, 1874.
6. Ibid., February 10, 1874.
7. Ibid., April 10, 1875.
8. Ibid., January 4, 1874.
9. The Colorado Banner, "Poor House", November 18, 1875.
10. Board of Commissioners proceedings, October 12, 1875, and November 17, 1875.
11. Ibid., January 4, 1876, and Sanford Gladden, Boulder Firsts, "County Poor House".
12. Board of Commissioners proceedings, September 4, 1876.
13. Ibid., August 9, 1876.
14. Ibid., January 5, 1877.
15. Ibid., April 5, 1877.
16. Ibid., October 8, 1877.
17. Ibid., January 9, 1878.
18. Ibid., January 18, 1878.
19. Ibid., April 7, 1879.
20. Ibid., October 8, 1878.
21. Ibid., August 2, 1880.
22. Ibid., October 20, 1882.
23. Ibid., October 4, 1886.
24. Ibid., December 1, 1881.
25. Samuel Freeze map of Boulder County, 1881. A copy of this map may be found at the University of Colorado's Norlin Library. Xerox copies at the Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder.
26. Boulder County Herald, "Grounds for County Hospital", November 30, 1881.
27. Ibid.
28. Board of Commissioners proceedings, April 22, 1882.
29. Boulder County Herald, "A New Hospital", April 5, 1882.
30. Boulder County Herald, "The County Hospital", April 26, 1882.
31. Board of Commissioners proceedings, April 22, 1882.
32. J.B.Schoolland, Boulder in Perspective, (Boulder, Colorado: Johnson Publishing Company, 1980), 149.
33. Board of Commissioners proceedings, July 21, 1882.
34. Ibid., January 12, 1888, and Schoolland, op cit.
35. Ibid., February 5, 1889.
36. Ibid., November 6, 1889.
37. Ibid., January 14, 1892.
38. Ibid., January 14, 1892.
39. Ibid., January 23, 1895.
40. Ibid., June 7, 1892.
41. Ibid., April 2, 1895.
42. Ibid., November 4, 1901 and January 14, 1902.
43. Boulder News, January 30, 1902.

- HISTORIC TIME LINE FOR
Boulder County Public Health
44. Jane Barker, "Focus on Homes", Boulder Daily Camera, Sunday section, August 7, 1977.
 45. Board of Commissioners proceedings, February 25, 1902, Boulder News, March 6, 1902.
 46. Mary Hummel Wells oral history tape #337, 1986. Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder.
 47. Board of Commissioners proceedings, January 11, 1904.
 48. Ibid, January 24, 1918
Boulder News-Herald, February 13, 1918 and February 16, 1918.
 49. Board of Commissioners proceedings, February 16, 1918.
 50. Ibid.
 51. Ibid., May 20, 1918, and June 29, 1918.
 52. William W. Wolf oral History tape #267, 1985. Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder.
 53. Boulder News-Herald, February 16, 1918.
 54. Forest Crossen, Western Yesterdays, Vol.1, (Boulder, Colorado: Boulder Publishing, Inc. 1965), 69.
 55. Ibid., December 7, 1918.
 56. Ibid., News-Herald, March 7, 1927.
 57. Board of Commissioners proceedings, September 15, 1962.
 58. Ibid., September 24, 1962.
 59. Ibid., October 15, 1962.
 60. Ibid., November 1, 1962.
 61. Ibid., November 8, 1962.
 62. Ibid., November 25, 1962.
 63. Wolf tape, Ibid.

HISTORIC TIME LINE FOR
BOULDER COUNTY POOR FARM

Compiled by Anne Dyni

- 1870s: Boulder provides free rooms in local boarding houses for paupers and lunatics.¹
- 1874: Dr. Charles Ambrook is appointed first county physician. (retains that position until 1893)²
- 1875: County rents a four-room house on Water Street to serve as county hospital/poor house. \$15/month rent.³
- County begins sending insane patients to Oak Lawn Retreat in Jacksonville, Illinois for treatment.⁴
- 1876: County commissioners instruct A.P.Allen to rent a home in Valmont suitable for a Poor House.⁵
- County rents two buildings in Valmont from H.W.Allen for one year.⁶
- 1877: Citizen complaint lodged with Commissioners to have Dr.Ambrook removed as county physician. After a hearing, complaint dismissed.⁷
- Commissioner Allen instruct to sublease the poor house building in Valmont,⁸ and Dr.Ambrook is authorized to locate another house for Poor House and Hospital.⁹
- 1878: Boulder County Medical Society offers to take charge of county's paupers at no charge, but Board rejects offer and reappoints Ambrook county physician.¹⁰
- Ambrook instructed to convert portion of the "old" courthouse for use as county hospital, but public outcry causes Board to rent the Grout House instead, for one year.¹¹
- Commissioners investigate Manitou Springs Hospital in Colorado Springs but find terms unsatisfactory.¹²
- 1879: Colorado opens state mental hospital in Pueblo; allowing Boulder County to transfer mental patients there instead of Jacksonville, Illinois.¹³
- 1880: Boulder County sends its first mental patient to insane asylum in Pueblo.¹⁴
- 1881: County purchases 40 acres from Clinton M. Tyler in the SW quarter of the SE quarter of Sec.31; T 1N; 70 W., for hospital site.¹⁵

- 1882: County advertises for construction bids for new county hospital on Tyler land.¹⁶ No contract awarded so Commissioners choose to build a small frame house on the land for a hospital instead.¹⁷
- 1883: Final bills submitted for new hospital building:
 \$492.50 construction costs
 \$ 50.00 to transfer the patients¹⁸
 Dr. Charles Ambrook replaced by Dr. R.G.Floyd as county physician.¹⁹
- 1885: Horace O.Dodge appointed county physician and remained so for 4 years.²⁰
- 1888: County poorhouse/hospital totally destroyed by fire. Patients temporarily moved to Martin House on 19th.²¹
 Poor Farm property is put up for sale for \$1300 and Board advertises for replacement property of approximately 80 acres.²²
- 1889: Dr.N.Mayfield appointed county physician in January²³, but is replaced in May by Dr. H.W. Allen. For the first time, a second physician, Dr. T.J.Ross is appointed to serve Longmont and to serve Longmont and vicinity.²⁴
 Inadequate county finances cause Board to postpone plans to build new County Farm so they rent George Walker's buildings and grounds near the Sternberg Flour Mill for \$200/year.²⁵
- Mary Arnett buys county poor farm (first advertised in June 1888) for \$1100.²⁶
- 1890: Dr.Fuel Bartlett becomes county physician.²⁷
 County purchases land from Thomas Danforth for \$4000 and erects large brick house on 22nd Street just south of Baseline.²⁸
- 1891: Board pays off mortgage on the Danforth property.²⁹
- 1892: Board grants permission for medical students at the university "to attend at the county hospital for clinical purposes" under the control of the county physician.³⁰
 Telephone is installed at County Farm for \$5/mo.³¹
- 1893: Dr.F.A.Shute appointed county physician.³²

- 1895: L.Z. Coman appointed county physician at \$300/year.³³
Removed telephone from County Farm.³⁴
- 1902: County farm property sold for \$15,000 to Wilbur F. Ripley, representing the Colorado Osteopathic Sanitarium.³⁵
- Purchased 120-acre property and house of Lucy A. Williams NE of Valmont for \$14,000, for use as Poor Farm.³⁶
- 1903: County physician Dr. George H. Cattermole.³⁷
- 1904: New building (dormitory) erected at poor farm.³⁸
- 1908: Dr. E.B. Trovillion appointed county physician at \$45/month.³⁹
- 1918: Dr. Jacob Campbell appointed county physician.⁴⁰
County sells the Valmont property to William A. Smith for \$26,000.⁴¹
- County purchases a 20-acre farm and orchard from W.W. Wolf (now 3400 Broadway) for \$9,500. Enlarge and improve the existing buildings for use as "County Sanitarium". Engage A.E. Saunders, architect.⁴²
- County issues bids for construction of sanitarium on W.W. Wolf property.⁴³
- Boulder city manager asks county to install a fire hydrant on sanitarium property.⁴⁴
- 1927: County grants a 3-year oil lease to Bert W. Strickland on land surrounding the County Home for \$1 an acre, retaining one-eighth royalty for the county.⁴⁵
- 1962: September: County home has become Boulder County General Hospital with dwindling patient load. County closes facility. Patients transferred to Boulder Community Hospital, Boulder Memorial, Longmont Community Hospital and Longs Peak Osteopathic Hospital.⁴⁶
- Mental Health Clinic moves into the county General Hospital building.⁴⁷
- County allows Naval Recruiting Office and Civil Air Patrol to use portions of the General Hospital building at no charge.⁴⁸

FOOTNOTES

1. Colorado Banner, Nov. 18, 1875
2. County Commissioner proceedings, February 10, 1874.
3. Ibid., October 5, 1875 and January 4, 1876.
4. Ibid., September 9, 1875.
5. Ibid., August 9, 1876.
6. Ibid., September 4, 1876.
7. Ibid., April 7, 1877.
8. Ibid., July 9, 1877.
9. Ibid., October 9, 1877.
10. Ibid., January 9, 1878.
11. Ibid., January 11, 1878, January 19, 1878.
12. Ibid., October 8, 1878 and October 14, 1878.
13. J.B.Schoolland, Boulder in Perspective, (Boulder, Colorado: Johnson Publishing Company, 1980), p. 149.
14. Commissioner proceedings, August 2, 1880.
15. Boulder County Herald, Nov. 30, 1881,
Boulder County deed book #70, p. 54
Commissioner proceedings, December 1, 1881.
16. Ibid., April 22, 1882.
17. Ibid., August 3, 1882
Boulder County Herald, April 26, 1882.
18. Boulder News and Courier, March 2, 1883
19. Commissioner proceedings, January 30, 1883.
20. Ibid., January 2, 1885.
21. Ibid., January 12, 1888.
22. Ibid., June 5, 1888.
23. Ibid., January 8, 1889
24. Ibid., May 9, 1889.
25. Ibid., February 5, 1889.
26. Ibid., November 6, 1889.
27. Ibid., January 15, 1890.
28. Ibid., February 6, 1890.
Jane Barker, "Focus on Homes", Boulder Daily Camera
Sunday Section, 8/7/1977
29. Commissioner proceedings, December 30, 1891.
30. Ibid., January 14, 1892.
31. Ibid., June 7, 1892.
32. Ibid., January 16, 1893.
33. Ibid., January 30, 1895.
34. Ibid., April 2, 1895.
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58. Commissioner proceedings, August 2, 1880
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Early Shelters for the Homeless

By
Anne
Dyini



Shelters for the homeless and indigent are not a recent phenomenon in Boulder County. Historically, such facilities have existed since the 1870s, when penniless citizens in Boulder were provided free rooms in a local boarding house.

When Dr. Ambrook, the county physician, suggested it was more prudent to rent an entire house for \$15 a month and to furnish it with "cheap

yet good furniture," the commissioners agreed. Thus, the county's first poor house was established.

It soon became apparent that many who had been eager to accept free accommodations in boarding houses now considered living in a poor house beneath their dignity. They had no desire to comply with rules requiring them to share in the cooking and household chores.



Boulder County Poor Farm about 1916. Mary Hummel Wells Collection.

Getting to know you.



Our administrator, Kathy Mekelburg, gets to know every one of our residents — and their families — personally.

That's because we're a small place with a big heart — just like the town of Berthoud where we're located.

If you want truly personalized care, call the people who will get to know you.

Grandview Manor

855 Franklin St.
Berthoud, CO 80513

(303) 532-2683

Where Caring is the Heart of the Matter

AN ARA LIVING CENTER

In 1881, Boulder County purchased six acres south of the university campus on what is now 22nd Street. There, they built a hospital in conjunction with a new poor house.

The site was close enough to town for the county physician to make his rounds, yet far enough away that "neighbors would be bothered but little." It was envisioned that medical students from the young university might someday obtain clinical instruction there.

After 20 years, this complex was sold to the new Colorado Osteopathic Sanitarium, and the commissioners were again faced with finding suitable property. Placing an ad in the Boulder News, they advertised for a working farm.

Lucy Williams of Valmont owned such a farm, 120 acres that once belonged to George Chambers, an early miner and farmer. Its many outbuildings appealed to the commissioners, and after adding a two-story dormitory to the house, the inmates were transferred to their new quarters.

The poor farm remained there until 1918, when officials tired of managing such a large acreage. They began searching for a smaller parcel where more modern facilities and a county hospital with a tubercular ward could be built.

Once again the inmates were moved, this time to 20 acres on north Broadway where W.W. Wolff once farmed and cultivated fruit trees. The stigmatized "poor farm" was then given a more appropriate designation,

"county sanitarium."

Confused by the move to a new facility, a few inmates occasionally wandered back to the old farm north of Valmont. Paul Hummel had moved his family into the farmhouse by then. His daughter, Mary, still remembers watching elderly inmates wander up the driveway, thinking they had returned home. A little white-haired man appeared at the door one day, cane in hand.

"He didn't have the energy to get back to Broadway where the county poor farm had moved to," Mary chuckled, "so my Mother had to call and they came after him in a Model Ford."

Mary bestowed the nickname "M.M. Bughouse" on the petite lady who often came to their home, wearing a long black dress and high-top shoes.

"She usually wandered off when the staff threatened her with a bath," Mary recalled. "The deep depression of her cheekbones were usually packed with dirt, and (her clothes) sometimes smelled like they had never been washed."

Today, with a twinkle in her eye, Mary Hummel Wells looks around her large Victorian farmhouse and declares, "This place is still the Poor Farm. We're just not taking in inmates."

Anne Dyini's latest book is "Back to the Basics: The Frontier Schools of Boulder County."