



St Luke's Hospital

Caring is its charitable tradition

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St Luke's Hospital is a 260-bed acute care facility in the South of Market area of San Francisco. It is the only private hospital in an area that is home to more than 40% of the City's population and serves a very diverse group of patients. The majority live in the immediate area but people from communities throughout the Greater Bay Area come to the hospital because they feel comfortable at St Luke's or because they are referred for specialized services. Ethnic minorities make up the majority of the hospital caseload: 35% are Hispanic; 15% are Filipino and other Asian; 10% are African Americans. The many new immigrants who speak little or no English are treated by physicians and support staff able to communicate in 34 languages or dialects.

St Luke's is the only hospital in San Francisco that is actively expanding its Medicare and Medi-Cal (Medicaid) patient load; the hospital already has the largest proportion of Medi-Cal patients of any hospital in the City - 30% while Medicare patients comprise 40% of the case load. St Luke's also operates the busiest private hospital emergency room in San Francisco, handling an average of 110 patients a day (more than 36,000 annually) and 145 patients per day is not uncommon. Its birthing center is one of the busiest in the City, delivering almost 2000 babies a year. Now in its 122nd year, St Luke's looks forward to the 21st century as one more challenge to be met.

Founded on July 1, 1871 under the auspices of the Episcopal Church, its guiding light was Reverend Thomas W. Brotherton, a physician as well as an Episcopalian minister. The hospital was first established on Lundy's Lane in Bernal Heights, two blocks east of 29th and Mission Streets, in a small house with a few outbuildings, accommodations for 17 patients as well as serving as Dr. Brotherton's home. Quite successful, the hospital quickly outgrew its small capacity.

The present site on Valencia near Army Street, a few blocks from the original hospital, was purchased in 1873 and by 1875, a fully furnished modern hospital with about 100 beds opened. Various Episcopalian church groups contributed and raised funds. Although St Luke's has always officially been an Episcopalian institution, its admission and staff policies have always been completely nonsectarian. The first hospital consisted of three major two-story buildings connected by wide hallways that could be used as wards during epidemics, raising the bed count to 130. Well-to-do San Franciscans contributed much of the cost for each of the major buildings,

which the hospital exhibiting good business logic named after the donors. There were the Keene, Gibbs and Mills buildings, the last named after Darius Ogden Mills. The same Darius O. Mills was a prominent early-day San Francisco banker and financier who made a fortune out of the California gold rush, expanded his holdings through shrewd investments in the Comstock Silver Lode and the Transcontinental Railroad, and later moved to New York where he was a fellow investor with the Vanderbilts and Rockefellers. Dr Brotherton served as hospital superintendent until 1878 when he resigned due to ill health, The Reverend G. H, Jenks, MD, another ordained minister, succeeded him. Lack of charitable funds In the early 1880s caused the hospital to close for a time and the premises were rented out: half of the space to the Episcopalian Old Ladies Home and half to the Homeopathic Hospital Association. Soon additional funds were raised and the doors reopened. By 1889 things were going so well that a training school for nurses was established, the first In California. It began a one-year course, soon became a two-year program, and by the turn of the century, was offering a three-year RN certificate. It lasted for almost a full century, and drew students from all over Northern California. By the 1970s, however, it was the last of its type in the City. Nursing education had swung away from the three-year hospital-based school in the direction of junior college and university training that was student oriented rather than service oriented. St. Luke's Nursing School tried to meet this challenge by affiliating with Dominican College of San Rafael in 1983, but finances and distance produced problems and the student nursing program expired in 1988.

For St Luke's, 1906 was an eventful year. In February, six nurses, two patients, the hospital pharmacist, an orderly and the superintendent came down with smallpox and the hospital was quarantined for two months. No sooner was the quarantine lifted then the Great 1906 Earthquake and Fire occurred April 18. The hospital's principal brick structure and the Gibbs Budding were utterly ruined and had to be demolished. The other buildings were damaged but could be used with some hazard. Tents were set up and from the first hour after the quake, the hospital opened its facilities to all comers. Soon the hospital relocated under the grandstand of the New California Jockey Club, a racetrack out what is now Urbana Drive near Stones Town. San Francisco General Hospital also moved out to the racetrack for a time. As the damaged building were repaired, three flats on San Jose Avenue became temporary surgical suite while patients with chronic illnesses stayed out at the Jockey Club until that campus closed in October of 1907. The quake and fire destroyed half the City, but donations poured into the San Francisco Relief and Red Cross Funds from all over the world and these helped in the hospital's charity work and rebuilding.

In 1910 St Luke's expanded by buying two adjacent parcels of land so that it now occupied the entire block bounded by Valencia, Army, San Jose and Duncan Streets. The old 1870 buildings were moved to the back of the property, and an entire new hospital of reinforced concrete with a brick facade was built. Construction included the four story 150 be hospital, a chapel, classrooms, and a new nurses home-occupied in July of 1913. As early as 1909, St Luke's had had " psychopathic department."

The hospital weathered two World Wars and the Depression with only moderate stress and problems with physician staffing, but by the 1960's what had been up-to-date in 1911 was barely adequate. Almost half of the patients were still cared for in large wards with only drawn curtains, between the beds. So In 1970 the present 260-bed, 12-story tower hospital was opened. Since then, every effort has been made to keep facilities state of the art. In the past five years every floor but one has been rebuilt and modernized, including surgery, maternity, ICU, and recovery rooms. In 1976 the eight-story Monteagle Office Budding was erected adjacent to the hospital specifically to attract physicians to this medically underserved area.

St Luke's had always run an informal drop-in emergency room cum clinic since its earliest days. But In 1920 this was formalized into a full-blown clinic with regular hours and staff, set up in the former Bancroft Library. This two-story brick building near the corner of Army and Valencia had been acquired as part of the 1910 expansion. Hubert Howe Bancroft (1832-1918) was a historian and publisher who had established himself as a bookseller in San Francisco during the Gold Rush. While he was publishing legal records and other books, he hit upon the idea of writing a history of California, realizing that many persons who were still alive had lived through the Spanish Mexican and Gold Rush eras. He sent agents throughout California and the western states to collect oral histories, newspapers, and any scrap of written historical material they could locate. He had a corps of writers and editors and starting in 1874, produced over three dozen thick volumes on Pacific Coast history, sold door to door and by subscription. Turning into a bibliophile, he sent his agents to Europe and all over the world to buy up entire libraries and in time created one of the largest libraries in the world. Eventually he contributed it to the University of California Berkeley where it formed the core of UC's world-famous Bancroft Library. At the time of the 1906 quake, the library still resided next to St Luke's and was almost lost when an eager National Guard officer in search of emergency toilet paper supplies issued a number of volumes to the refugee camps before he was stopped.

The Bancroft Library Building was old but solid, with 14-foot ceilings, and housed the clinic until 1965 when it was relocated to newer facilities. While almost all other outpatient clinics in nongovernmental hospitals have been closed, St Luke's Neighborhood Clinic continues to operate, handling approximately 13,000 visits annually. Charges, including lab work and prescriptions, are based on ability to pay and average \$16 per patient visit - far below the actual cost or care. Patients have access to 28 specialty services provided by a volunteer staff of more than 60 physicians. The clinic operates at an annual deficit of \$350,000-\$500,000. In total charity care, St Luke's provides nearly \$5.5 million a year. Since its inception, St Luke's has relied on gifts and donations to carry out its charitable work. For many years it practiced "Robin Hood medicine," taking from the rich to care for the poor, by reserving 10% of the daily room rate for charity care. When government medicine in the form of Medicare and Medicaid arrived, however, this was no longer permitted.

St Luke's continues to rely on its "family" for support-board members, trustees, physicians, hospital staff and volunteers; on gifts and grants from foundations, corporations and community groups. Over the past 122 years the same family names keep appearing as donors and members of the board: Pope, Crocker, Mills, Porter, Bourne, Whitelaw, Reid, Paige, Orrick, Sutro, Bothin, Pillsbury, Dibblee and Monteaale among others. Some gifts are received from patients and their families, but most of St Luke's patients are not in a position to contribute substantially to the hospital.

St Luke's began its internship and residency training program in 1891, and until fairly recently, had affiliations with both UCSF and Stanford Medical Schools for resident rotations. Family practice residents from SFGH/UCSF currently spend part of their time at St Luke's. Seventy percent of the physicians on staff are board certified in their respective specialties and many hold teaching appointments at UCSF and Stanford. St Luke's also functions as an excellent primary acute care hospital with medical, surgical, maternal and pediatric services. It has good working relationships with other San Francisco hospitals that maintain specialized tertiary care units such as open heart surgery and burn centers that are much more sophisticated, "high tech" and costly,

and can transfer patients quickly to them when appropriate. From the pioneering efforts of one doctor working out of his home more than 120 years ago, St Luke's has grown into an efficient and caring general hospital well adapted to its inner city area, its community and its charitable mission. ○

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