

A Brief History of Good Samaritan Home/Cape Albeon

A parable put into action

The year 1856. The place was St. Louis, Missouri. Immigrants were arriving in the new land from Germany. Among them was a young girl whose parents had died on the trip. We do not know the girl's name, but we do know she was ill with Typhoid fever. Fortunately, the young girl met a lady by the name of Mrs. Wilhelmina Meier who nurses her back to health. Mrs. Meier's late husband had been the janitor of St. Peter's Evangelical Church. It was Mrs. Meier who brought the Pastor's attention to the great need of the immigrants.

The Pastor of St. Peter's Evangelical Church, Rev. Louis Nollau was a graduate of the Barmen Mission School in Germany and was essentially sent to America to do mission work here. In the spirit of the Good Samaritan, he and other friends succeeded in generating enough money to rent a building located on Carr Street, between 16th & 17th streets for their first hospital. The small hospital began operations with a humble list of equipment: six chairs, one stove, one table, and three beds. The dedicated nursing staff comprised of Mrs. Meier and an aide. The only medical doctor was Dr. E. A. Fellerer, a homeopathic physician. Pastor Nollau was the Good Samaritan Hospital's director and provided religious and spiritual guidance. Due to the great need, the hospital was soon expanded to a total of 24 beds.

With continuing growth, a new facility was purchased at Pratt (now Jefferson) and Dayton Avenues for \$5,500.00. Because of its expanded service and great public need, the organization of a hospital corporation was initiated. The first board of Trustees was named and Pastor Nollau resigned from his position at St. Peter's to concentrate his energies on the newly restructured hospital. On March 14, 1859, the legislature of the State of Missouri granted its charter as "The Good Samaritan Hospital Incorporated."

A new building was erected at Jefferson & Dayton Ave. address at the cost of \$24,000. The new facility accommodated 200 patients. With the outbreak of the Civil War, the government rented the hospital for \$250.00 per month. The facility was used to care for Union Soldiers. The patients at the hospital prior to the Governments' s use, were returned to the old quarters on Carr Street. It was sometime after the war that the medical staff began a School of Nursing.

In 1905, the Board of Trustees turned its attention to the needs of older people. Although the charter did not change, the Hospital then became known as the Good Samaritan Home for the Aged. On Feb 15, 1926, the Board purchased the Liberty Hospital at Washington & Taylor Streets. The Hospital had 90 beds. The board members personally assumed responsibility for the purchase price. A few years later, another hospital facing Washington

Ave. was purchased and the 2 buildings were joined by the construction of a large dining room.

Before the home was ready to celebrate its centennial anniversary, the Board of Trustees struggled with problems with the location of the Home and the need for future expansion. In the fall of 1954, the site at 5200 South Broadway was purchased. A capital funds campaign for \$500,000 was conducted to partially finance the \$1,300,000 proposed structure. The four-story building, now known as the Main Building, was begun in 1957 and was occupied by residents in the fall of 1958.

In 1963, another building was sorely needed. The North Annex building was dedicated in May of 1965. The North Annex contained resident rooms, lounges, a chapel and an auditorium. The waiting list for admission continued to grow so a third building was built. The South Annex containing resident rooms and a modern medical facility was dedicated in December of 1975.

To respond to the financial needs of older people, the Board formed The Good Samaritan Foundation in 1989. In less than 10 years, the Foundation provided approximately \$1,000,000 in financial aid to elderly residents. In addition to financial aid, the Foundation publishes the "Currents". The newsletter covers items of interest for Good Samaritan Home, Good Samaritan Foundation and Cape Albeon and is sent to more than 8,000 readers throughout the region.

In the mid-1990s it became apparent that many of the people Good Samaritan Home normally served were migrating to the western St. Louis suburbs. The occupancy level of the home was slowly declining. A long-range planning committee was formed to study the situation and make recommendations for the future. The study recommended that Good Samaritan Home build a satellite facility which was named Cape Albeon. The facility was dedicated on July 29, 2000.

Since that time, the community has expanded significantly, featuring numerous updates and renovations, including a hen house with chickens and their eggs, and honeybees, from which we harvest honey. Beginning with the expansions and renovations at the Village Assisted Living, we opened a secure Memory Care neighborhood, The Cove, in 2021. Additionally, a new spa room was renovated in 2024, along with upgrades to flooring and interior spaces. At the Harbor Independent Living, a Sports Court with pickleball, bocce ball and shuffleboard, was completed in 2022, and we are currently working on expanding the dining room, which is set to open in 2026. We are committed to creating a wonderful environment on our beautiful campus that enriches the lives of our residents. Our goal is to ensure they feel safe and comfortable while also fostering friendships and having fun.