

BRADLEY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL



Fig. 1. Bradley Memorial Hospital across Orchard Street, c. 1920. [G1024]

Built in 1918 as a memorial to Mary Cornelius Bradley, the daughter of Professor Harold Bradley and his wife Mary Josephine Crane Bradley, Bradley memorial was used as a children's hospital until the 1930 erection of the orthopedic hospital. Since that time Bradley memorial has held assorted branches of the medical school, and currently houses the department of Medical Administration and International Health.

Dr. Harold Cornelius Bradley came to the University of Wisconsin as a junior professor of biochemistry in 1906. Within two years he had met, fallen in love with and married a student, Mary Josephine Crane, (who was completely deaf from age two) in her junior year. The bride's father, wealthy Chicago industrialist Charles Crane was personal friends with the famous architect Louis Sullivan, then at the nadir of his career. Crane hired Sullivan to design and build a house for the newlyweds, the huge and now famous Bradley house in University Heights. This house and yard occupied all of block 19 of the fancy new western suburb of Madison. The Bradley's first child, Mary Cornelius was born here May 2, 1909. Seven other children, all boys were to follow. Tragedy struck the Bradley family, when the child Mary contracted spinal meningitis and pneumonia and died January 15, 1916 age 6 years 8 months. In the following eight months, the Bradleys sold off in pieces the parts of their land not occupied by the house, and then in September 1917 sold the house and the four lots on which it stands to the Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity for \$30,000. A few months previous to the sale of the house the Bradleys (together with Mrs. Bradley's family the Cranes) had

offered to the regents of the university a donation of \$50,000 for the construction of a memorial hospital for the purpose of research into childhood diseases. Originally the name for this building was to be the Crane Memorial Hospital, but was soon changed to the Mary Cornelia Bradley Memorial Hospital.¹

In Dr. Bradley's letter to the regents of June 5, 1916, he writes: "Mr. and Mrs. Chas. R. Crane, Mrs. Bradley and myself wish to establish a memorial for our little daughter, Mary Cornelia, whom we lost this winter ... We have felt that the best way to establish this memorial of ideals would be to build a research and teaching hospital in connection with the medical school ... we are not willing that this should be a memorial of a monumental kind. We realize that the amount to be expended is small. We wish none of it diverted from the more spiritual purpose of the gift, into costly architecture. We have in mind some simple and sincere type of architecture..."¹

The Bradley Hospital was built at the same time and by the same contractor as the old student infirmary. The regents let the contract on May 20, 1918 to the Dahl-Stedman Company of Chicago for \$137,445 (including both the Bradley hospital and the infirmary). The infirmary was begun and finished first, and the Bradley hospital was started June 1, 1918 and finished in the summer of 1920. Even before its completion the Bradley memorial was pressed into use because of the influenza epidemic of 1918 which swamped the recently completed infirmary. The Bradley memorial was located south of Linden Drive, facing on Orchard Street, a small north-south street just west of Charter Street, later vacated by the University.²

The two buildings (Bradley memorial and the infirmary), designed by Arthur Peabody or his employee Henry Nyeland, were essentially identical. They were two stories above a raised basement with walls of buff brick, floor of poured concrete, and a red tile roof. The buildings were trimmed with Bedford limestone.

The Bradley Memorial Hospital served its original purpose³ well until 1930 when the university erected a larger and better equipped orthopedic hospital on the block to the west. Bradley memorial then began a long career as temporary quarters for transient departments of the medical school. These included: pediatrics, plastic surgery, and the Wisconsin Psychiatric Institute (1925-1963). The building underwent a complete interior remodeling in 1964.⁴ In 1950 the connecting bridge to the main hospital was built. The Bradleys had asked that "because of the personal associations which the memorial has to Mr. and Mrs. Crane and ourselves, we do not wish to have its individuality lost or buried later in the probable development of the Medical School."⁵ This has against all odds remained the case, even though by legislation, in the 1920s it became a part of the Wisconsin General Hospital. Currently [1993] the building houses the department of Medical Administration on the first floor, part of the UW clinics on the second floor, and in the basement, the department of International Health, and the intended long term user Middleton Medical Library storage. The memorial plaques commemorating Mary Cornelia Bradley still hang in the foyer and main waiting room.

1) *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, April 1948, p. 26-27, May 1950, p. 10; Madison City directories; Dane County vital records; *Perspectives of a University*, Gordon Orr et al. p. 84. *Regent's Report*, 1918-1920, p. 15-16.

2) *Regent's Minutes*, June 20, 1916, May 10, 1918;

3) And others as well: during the debate surrounding the construction of the Wisconsin General Hospital in the 1920s, Bradley Memorial was used for the care of the state indigent patients, which became part of the responsibility of the new four-year medical program.

4) Bradley to Seaman, June 5, 1916, series 24/1/1 box 6 University Archives.

5) Bradley to Seaman, June 5, 1916, series 24/1/1 box 6 University Archives.