Please Don’t Make Me Close That Collection

How We Processed and Made the Highland Hospital Records Accessible
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OUR CONTEXT
HIGHLAND HOSPITAL RECORDS
ASHEVILLE, N. C.—WHERE NINE PERISHED—Ruins of the four-story Highland Hospital, mental institution here, which was destroyed by fire early today. Nine women patients perished in the fire and 20 others escaped, several with serious injuries. The institution was owned by Duke University. (Story on Page A-1.) —AP Wirephoto.

**9 Women Patients Die as Fire Wrecks Mental Hospital**

Asheville, N. C., March 11—Fire gutted one of the main buildings of the Highland Hospital for Nervous Diseases today and Dr. H. T. Bennett, medical director, said nine women patients were killed. Three others were injured, two critically.

Mrs. F. Scott Fitzgerald, widow of the successful author of the 1920's, was one of the victims.

Bennett said 29 women patients, all mental cases, were sleeping in the three-story building when fire broke out in the diet kitchen about midnight. Flames rapidly enveloped the building, trapped six of those killed on the top floor. Only two bodies had been recovered.

Firemen said one unidentified woman, in an upper story window, stood wrapped in a towel with her hair ablaze and yelled at rescuers to keep cool. Another person leaped from a third-story window.

Townsmen swarmed to the scene and could hear the screams of the victims trapped in the building.

Firemen were hampered in rescue operations because the heavy windows of the hospital were shackled with strong chains to keep them from being opened too far. It was a precaution to prevent patients from escaping.

Bennett said the ruins were too hot to allow firemen to search for the bodies of the missing women. He said he doubted that the hunt for other bodies would begin for another 24 or 36 hours.

Patients who escaped the building were clad in flimsy night garments. It was a chilly night with the mercury hovering 12 to 15 degrees above freezing.

Two of the dead were identified as Mrs. Bruce Kennedy, about 30, and Mrs. Allen T. Hopp, elderly widow of a prominent Asheville doctor. Dr. F. R. Terry, Buncombe County coroner, said they died of asphyxiation. They were alive when removed from the blazing structure but artificial respiration failed to revive them.

Bennett withheld the names of the other victims until relatives were notified.

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Nurses from Norburn Hospital and other Asheville hospitals were brought to Highland to care for the rescued patients.

Only a three-wall shell of concrete and twisted steel was left standing, and the building appeared a total loss.
Time Travel with me back to 2016...

• Pokémonaissance
• Zike virus emerged
• Flint, Michigan water crisis
• Brexit
• Summer Olympics in Rio
• Chicago Cubs won the World Series
• Donald Trump became president-elect
Also in 2016: A researcher’s request set off a chain reaction
Summer 2016: Corporate Risk Management Requests the Highland Hospital Records

- The request was prompted by concern about legal materials in the collection after a researcher’s request
- At the time, the collection was 4.3 Linear Feet (2 cartons, 1 half manuscript box, 1 map folder, 1 map tube)

**Collection contains**
- Correspondence
- financial records
- legal records
- hospital administration records
- A LOT of PHI
Winter 2017: The PHI is Discovered

Subject: Highland Hospital Archives Collection Review

Lucy – I am almost complete with the review; however, we have identified a problem. There is a considerable amount of HIPAA protected information mixed in with the financial files and some other files such as lists of patient names and some patient clinical information. Separately I have emailed Counsel's Office for guidance, but I also wanted to ask you what the Archives process is when federally protected privacy is involved. Thank you for any guidance you can provide.
Recommendation to Close the Highland Hospital Records

Subject: RE: Highland Hospital Archives Collection Review

Lucy — Thank you, the policy was quite helpful. Because the patient information is so interspersed throughout the collection and because it is behavioral health information, I recommend that these files be categorized as closed. I will ask [redacted] to work directly with you for return of the files.
Don’t Panic!

This collection was not processed to facilitate access, but that doesn’t mean with some planning that it can’t be reprocessed.
Fall 2017: Highland Hospital Records are Reprocessed
REFERENCE QUESTIONS & TRANSPARENCY
CRITERIA
for reprocessing

Collection Usage
Collection Size
Staffing
ADVOCATE!

Not everyone understands Archives!
Thank you for taking this journey through time with us!

https://faids.mcarchives.duke.edu/catalog/mcahighland

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