

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF ANDHRA MEDICAL COLLEGE and KING GEORGE HOSPITAL

- *Dr. K.V.G.K. Tilak, M.D.*

The story of King George Hospital, from a humble beginning in 1845, exactly 150 years ago till to-day, is full of episodes of pathos, hurdles, disappointments, surges of growth, achievements, fame, phases of inactivity and disillusionment.

A civil dispensary existed in 1845 catering to the needs of the people of Visakhapatnam. A Hospital was built in 1857 at a total cost of Rs.17,200/-. The Government gave Rs.6975/- as its contribution and the rest was raised by way of contributions from local benefactors. The local Zamindar, Sri Ankitham Venkata Jagga Rao took an active part. There was a record, showing purchase of 30 iron cots, probably implying this was a 30 bedded hospital: The probable site was the present Anatomy and Physiology buildings area. An amount of Rs.50/- per month was given as a grant by the Govt. for the expenditure. During 1863- 64, the Government threatened to withdraw this grant of Rs.50/- P.M. promising only a supply of medicines and the hospital faced a serious threat of closure. It was the benevolent Maharajah of Vizianagaram who came forward with a grant of Rs.10,000/- in Government Securities and rescued the hospital by his magnanimity. He was the sole patron of the Hospital till 1875. During this period a hospital management committee was formed with the District Collector as the President and the District Medical & Sanitary Officer as Honorary Secretary. The Maharajah visited the hospital many times during this period and evinced keen interest.

From 1875 onwards, the Municipality (The municipality of Visakhapatnam was incorporated in 1858) and the local funding associations gave a contribution of Rs.200/-PM. This, along with the interest from the government securities deposited by the Maharajah of Vizianagaram, which was Rs.23,200/- by then, and the sale proceeds of the medicines, took care of the hospital maintenance. There was a cryptic remark in 1880 that "doing operations in the verandah is neither good for the patient nor the doctor" and mention was made about the urgent need for the construction of a separate room. Records of 1883 showed that there were between 11-17 in-patients and about 100 out patients. The yearly turnover of major operations was between 40 and 50. By 1898 there were about 48 in-patients and the out patients were between 150 and 200.

The beginning of the 20th Century saw a flurry of activity in the expansion of the hospital. The year 1900 saw building of cottages for "caste" in-patients, wards for Europeans and also an out-patient department. In the year 1902, permission was accorded for the starting of a Medical School for licentiate course under the leadership of Maier Vickers and his staff.

The school buildings were situated far away in the present old post office and Government Queen Mary's School. Surgeon General Browne was so impressed by the teaching in the medical school, he made a special mention about the good work of Dr. Chandrasekhara Mudaliar and the microscopic work of Dr. Keshav Pai in 1904. The kindhearted Maharani Sri Godey Chitti Janakamma Garu of Chemudu Estate provided the needed funds for the Medical School building, to be built close to the hospital for the convenience of the students and the foundation stone was laid on 20.2.1905 by the Hon'ble Arthur Oliver Villiers, Baron Amp; -U G.C.I.E., Governor of Madras.

The period from 1904-1909 saw a growth in the bed strength of the hospital from 54 to 83 and so the annual expenditure went from Rs.13,012/- to Rs. 17,097/-. The medical school building was completed and ready for occupation at the present Anatomy building site by 1910. Sensing the importance of the hospital and the growing demand and popularity, Surgeon General Smyth observed that the sandy hill above the present hospital would be a good place for a new hospital, indeed it proved to be prophetic. The popularity can be gauged by the figures which say that 746 operations were done that year under the superb guidance of Major Faulks, and 205 of these were done on patients coming from other districts. The hospital was brought under the administrative control of the District Medical Officer. The dispute regarding the ownership of the site **was** ratified by the Government in 1913 and the ownership was vested with the Hospital management committee.

The details of the hospital are **as** follows:

- Total, 83 beds
- The main hospital building had six wards with 52 beds
- There was a ward for police patients with 8 beds
- A Cholera ward for cholera Patients with 10 beds
- A maternity labor room with 4 beds
- A cottage with 9 single beds
- In addition, there was a septic theater and
- a septic ward in the present S5 ward
- An operation theater in the present radiology department
- A students' room,
- a microscope room,
- 3 store rooms
- An x-ray and dark room.
- Outpatient block (present records room)
- Kitchen

Additional cottages were added. Two of these cottages can still be seen just above the physiology block which are now ladies' and men's cloak rooms and the canteen.

During heavy rains in 1914 a part of the hospital building came down and the other part also was thought to be dangerously living. The hospital was shifted to the Medical School building with the consent of the Maharani and the school was shifted to a rented building. The Government sanctioned Rs.1,27,000/- In the same year for the construction of a new hospital. This amount was later enhanced to Rs. 4,97,910/- in 1915. At this time Mr.Cardew, a member of Governor's Council who visited Visakhapatnam suggested that the new hospital should be built on the sandy hill south of the Collector's office which would provide ample area for a future expansion. This farsightedness of Mr. Cardew is responsible for the present area.

Construction of the Hospital was delayed due to the First World War. The Construction of the new hospital was taken up in 1918 and was completed by 1923 with a bed strength of 192. The buildings completed were as follows (in a sprawling 36-acre area)

1. Administrative block
- 2 Men's Surgical wards  
(Present S1, S2, S3 and S4)
3. Men's Medical wards  
(Present Urology, Surgical, Plastic Surgery and Burns Wards)
4. Women's ward
  - a, Surgical (Present S3 ward)
  - b) Medical (Present M3 ward-cancer ward)
10. Dispensary (Present boy Students' Cloak room)

This Hospital was declared open on 19th July,1923, indeed a red-letter day in the annals of the hospital's history, by Dewan Bahadur Sri Rajah Panuganti Rama Rayaningar of Panagal (Near Kalahasti of Chittor district), Hon'ble Chief Minister of the Madras province. The Hospital was called King George Hospital in honor of the reigning British Monarch. A separate maternity block with 140 beds was ready by March, 1928 and was called Wilson maternity ward, commemorated by Surgeon General, Major General, M. Wilson, C.B.E., O.B.E., K.H.S., I.M.S.

By July 1932 a separate block for ENT and Ophthalmology patients with an in-patient bed strength of 80 and with facilities to run the outpatient clinics was constructed. About

this time Ms. Barooh of Assam generously donated Rs.35,000/- towards electrical installation in the hospital. Octogenarian Dr. Rednam Surya Prasada Rao an alumnus of the institution recalls with pride that the only two institutions that had electricity in those days were the Visakhapatnam Port and the King George Hospital. A tablet acknowledging the donation of Ms. Barooh is to be found near the present CSSD.

Looking at the crowded outpatient block of those days the gifted Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University Dr. Cattamanchi Ramalinga Reddy, known for his ready wit and sarcasm, was said to have made the following terse and cryptic remark, "this is not an outpatient department, this is a get out department, build a new one." The sensitive authorities then took up the construction of a separate block which was declared open in 1940 by H.E. Sir Arthur Hope, G.C.I.E.M.C. and is called Ebden block, named after the redoubtable surgeon and Principal, Major J.A.W. Ebden. This OP block took care of the increasing number of the out-patients attending the medical, surgical, orthopedic, tuberculosis, dermato-venereology, dental and casualty departments. In 1941 a separate children's ward with 54 beds was built which in course of time became an extension of the obstetrics & Gynecology Department to house the library, lecture hall and post-graduate students of the department.

The necessity of a blood Bank was recognized by the early forties due to the increasing surgical work and also the Second World War and a blood bank was opened under the charge of an Asst. Surgeon in the area which is now occupied by the Orthopedic Theatre.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, 1948, the foundation stone for a new building was laid by Col. S.L. Bhatia, IMS., Surgeon General of the Govt. of Madras, between the surgical and medical wards, designed for the new administrative block on the ground floor, twin operation theatres on the first floor and 18 special rooms on the 2nd floor. This was completed in 1951.

From 1956 on wards, the growth in the hospital was mainly through reorganization and establishment of the super specialties. The surgical specialties took the marching lead with orthopedics, cardio-thoracic surgery and neuro-surgery followed by urology. It was in 1971, one medical unit was converted into the cardiology department with a bed strength of 24 followed by the establishment of neurology on 31st December 1976

The Eighties saw the establishment of various other specialties like Nuclear Medicine, Radiation-therapy, Gastroenterology, Nephrology, Endocrinology, Traumatology and Plastic Surgery which has recently been expanded to house a separate burns ward under its wings.

On 12<sup>th</sup> December 1949, the foundation stone was laid for the Bhavanagar Block by Sir Sri Krishna Kumarsinhji of Bhavanagar, Governor of Madras, with a bed strength of 100 for general medical patients, sick nurses and psychiatry cases. On 20<sup>th</sup> August 1955 the Rajendra Prasad ward was declared open by H.E., Hon'ble Sri Babu Rajendra Prasad, the first President of our country, for general medical patients with a bed strength of 120.

On 18<sup>th</sup> January 1956 the Pediatric ward with a bed strength of 120 (80 for pediatric medical and 40 for pediatric surgical patients) was declared open by Rajakumari Amrut Kaur, Union Minister of Public Health. On 26<sup>th</sup> September 1956 the Institute of Gynecology & Obstetrics was declared open by Smt. Chandrasekhar, Union Deputy Minister for Health. A major reorganization of patients took place about this time with the addition of these new blocks to King George Hospital. Two super specialties were also added, namely Cardio-Thoracic Surgery with a bed strength of 44 and Neurology & Neuro Surgery with a bed strength of 28 in 1956. A separate Operation Theatre was readied for these specialties and was called the Ebden theatre. Extensions were made to the OP Block to house the Gynecology & Obstetrics outpatients, Ophthalmic OP and ENT on one side, Pediatric, Dermatology and Venereology on the other side. The Urology Department was started in 1969.

The Growth in the bed strength of King George Hospital in the century is as follows:

1913	83 beds
1923	192
1933	342
1941	432
1946	700
1953	793
1956	983
1958	1033
1995	1037

The only two new buildings that were added in the last four decades are those of the Cardiology and Nuclear Medicine, while all others are only modifications or extensions. The role played by the Coastal Andhra Heart Foundation and BARG is laudable. The growth of specialties in the last two decades, though a boon to patients has been the bane for the major

specialties of General Medicine and General Surgery, their units and beds were nibbled away. It is highly desirable to have a super-specialty block separately to house all these specialties which then would permit proper organization of the facilities and allow for an orderly future expansion. Plans are with the Govt. and a favorable outcome is awaited.

The turn of the century heralded the beginning of numerous changes in the hospital set up and it is hoped, similar events would take place from now on to revive this doddering old giant with a hoary past and a glorious tradition.

–Written in 1995 and is reprinted with only minor changes.