

DR. DEAN C. BURNS
1896-1978



Section A, Block 145 Lot 12

Picture a youth, a hard worker, perhaps 16 or 17 years old, sitting in his science classroom listening to a very basic lecture on the difference between veins and arteries. A knock interrupts the lesson and the superintendent beckons the young man out to the hall. After a brief conversation the youth returns to the classroom for his books, then leaves the building. Within the hour he is standing next to a bed with a patient, helping to “bleed” the ill individual or testing results in a lab. The next day he returns to the same classroom for a similar lecture, having worked with those very things the teacher is lecturing on. Later that same week the teacher simply nods as the student is once again called from class, this time to assist in childbirth, or help set a broken bone.



Welcome to the early life of Dean C. Burns, the father of modern healthcare in Petoskey.

Dean C. Burns was born on December 19, 1896, at the home of his parents, Dean S. and Emma (Bohm) Burns. Dean Sr. worked at



the Petoskey Cement Co. and served as undersheriff to the community, but Dean Jr. knew from an early age that he wanted to become a doctor. His family's physicians, George and John Reycraft, heavily influenced Dean, and nine years after they delivered him, Dean began his medical career serving as an office boy for the physicians. At 15 he began an unofficial apprenticeship

under the two doctors. While most kids his age were earning money as errand boys, Dean was vaccinating people, aiding in surgery, and helping to deliver babies. As an apprentice of the Reycrafts, he followed the accepted medical practices of the day, including bleeding people and fumigating the homes of the sick. Medical treatments changed immensely in the years that Dr. Burns practiced, and, over 60 years later he wrote, "I'd probably be arrested today for some of the things I did while assisting the Reycrafts."

In 1915 Burns entered the University of Chicago; the 24-hour train ride was his first real trip away from home. His schooling was paid for by the Parkers, a Cincinnati family that summered next door to the Burns family. Perhaps they were impressed by his work ethic as a young man or his pleasant attitude that many later patients commented

Dean Burns began the pursuit of his medical dream as a new generation of medical schooling came into effect. No longer were future doctors able to go directly to medical school with no prior higher education; schools now required at least one year of college education before entering medical school, with the strictest, such as John Hopkins University, requiring an undergraduate degree before acceptance. An earlier evaluation of all medical schools in the United States found a high percentage sadly lacking in many areas, resulting in the closing of many schools. Those that remained open were forced to implement "new" ideas and better training. Due to the stricter requirements the number of doctors actually declined during the years of Burns' schooling.



Dr. Dean C. Burns
Graduation from medical school

on. Whatever the reason, Dean didn't disappoint them. At school Burns was a conscientious student, avoiding recruitment by the university football coach and spending most of his time studying. He worked his way through school as a student assistant in the biology library, aide to a toxicology professor, and a nursing instructor, experience that would help him years later when he began a nursing program at North Central Michigan College.

In 1917 Dean enlisted in the army. As a future doctor, he could serve in the Medical Enlisted Reserve Corps and continue his schooling. At that time many medical students were encouraged to finish their training before being sent overseas. A year later Chicago was crippled

by the influenza epidemic. Over 8,500 people died, despite advance warnings from the health commissioner and the shutdown of non-essential establishments. Experimental vaccinations were given to fight the secondary complications that came with the flu, but nothing seemed to slow the illness. Burns and many of his fellow medical students ended up on the frontlines of their own battlefield as they helped the sick throughout the epidemic.

Upon graduation in 1922 Dr. Burns received a tempting offer to begin work with Dr. Charles and Dr. Will Mayo at the famous Mayo Clinic, the first medical facility to offer an integrated medical practice. The Mayo Family practice began offering medical teamwork in 1892 and soon attracted specialists of all areas to its clinic. Doctors from all over the world came to learn from this respected institution, similar to the one Dr. Burns dreamed of starting in Petoskey. Loyalty to his hometown and the two doctors who had encouraged him made Dr.



Dean and Marcella Burns
Shortly after their marriage

Burns refused the Mayo fellowship; instead he completed a residency in surgery at St. Luke's Hospital in Chicago and then returned to Petoskey, where he became the attending surgeon working with Drs. Reycraft.

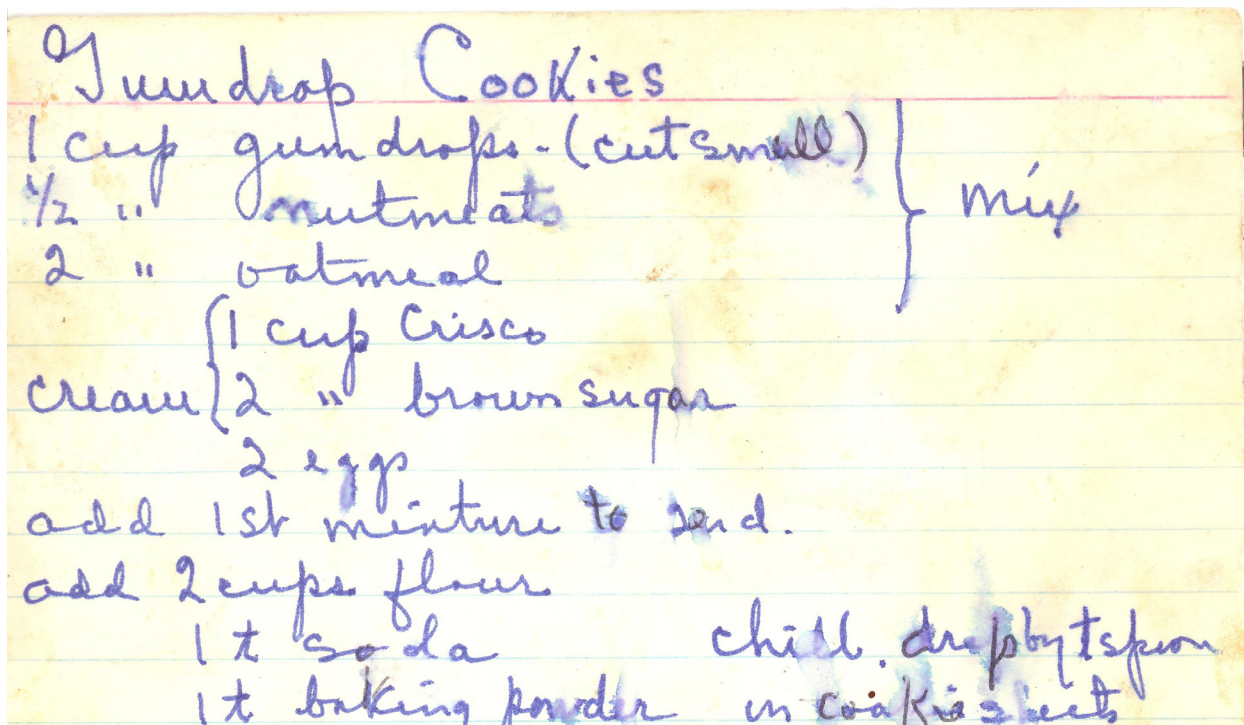
Despite Dr. Burns' desire to move ahead with his dream of a specialists' clinic, he respected the differing opinions of the Reycrafts. The doctor brothers had no use for a clinic when they felt perfectly capable of doing everything themselves. Dr. Burns did not want to go against the Reycrafts' wishes after all they had done for him, and waited until after their deaths before putting his own plan into

action. With encouragement from Dr. Will and Dr. Charles Mayo, Burns held fast to his dream. By age 30 he began buying land on which a future hospital could be built.

In 1930 Dr. Burns married nurse Marcella Whalen. Marcella grew up on a farm in Paris, Michigan but moved to Petoskey to attend nursing school at Petoskey Hospital. The couple dated for eight years—some of those dates included house calls to patients. The wedding took place at the Emmanuel Episcopal Church (then located at the corner of Waukazoo and Mitchell streets) early in the morning so they could be at the train station by 8:00 a.m. They honeymooned at a medical convention. After marriage Marcella stopped nursing, but she never stopped caring for and helping others. She raised their three children, spoiled their grandchildren, and still found time to offer assistance to friends and those in need. She often dropped off unexpected gifts of cookies and made little things for birthday parties. Her daughter-in-law remembered Marcella's caring nature, saying that if you had to be sick, you "wanted to be sick at her [Marcella's] house" because she took such good care of you.

Marcella was well loved by the community for her acts of kindness and warm personality. She supported her husband's vision and dedication, always standing beside him and helping from the background. Years later Dr. Burns would thank her and their children for their long suffering throughout a career that required him to be away from them so often. Marcella spent her entire life serving others with a cheerful heart, and the entire community was saddened by her death in 1986.

Less than 3 months after Dean and Marcella's wedding, Dr. John Reycraft died; his brother George had passed away several years earlier. Dr. Burns founded the Burns Clinic and began putting his dream into reality. While eager to begin, he did not want to "scare away" patients by adding a doctor in an unfamiliar field, so he began searching for a non-intimidating area of medicine. In July of 1931 the first specialist, ophthalmologist William Conway, joined the clinic, which still met at the old Petoskey Hospital of the Reycrafts. Eventually the clinic moved to a new location on Howard Street over the Eckel Drugstore. Dr. Burns later wrote, "Although the clinic was definitely planned long before my return to Petoskey, it was formally accomplished with the acquisition of Dr. Conway's services, and I



Marcella's recipe for Gum Drop Cookies
 One of the favorites



109—Little Traverse Hospital, Petoskey, Mich.

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have accordingly considered that date as the beginning of my planned specialty group.”

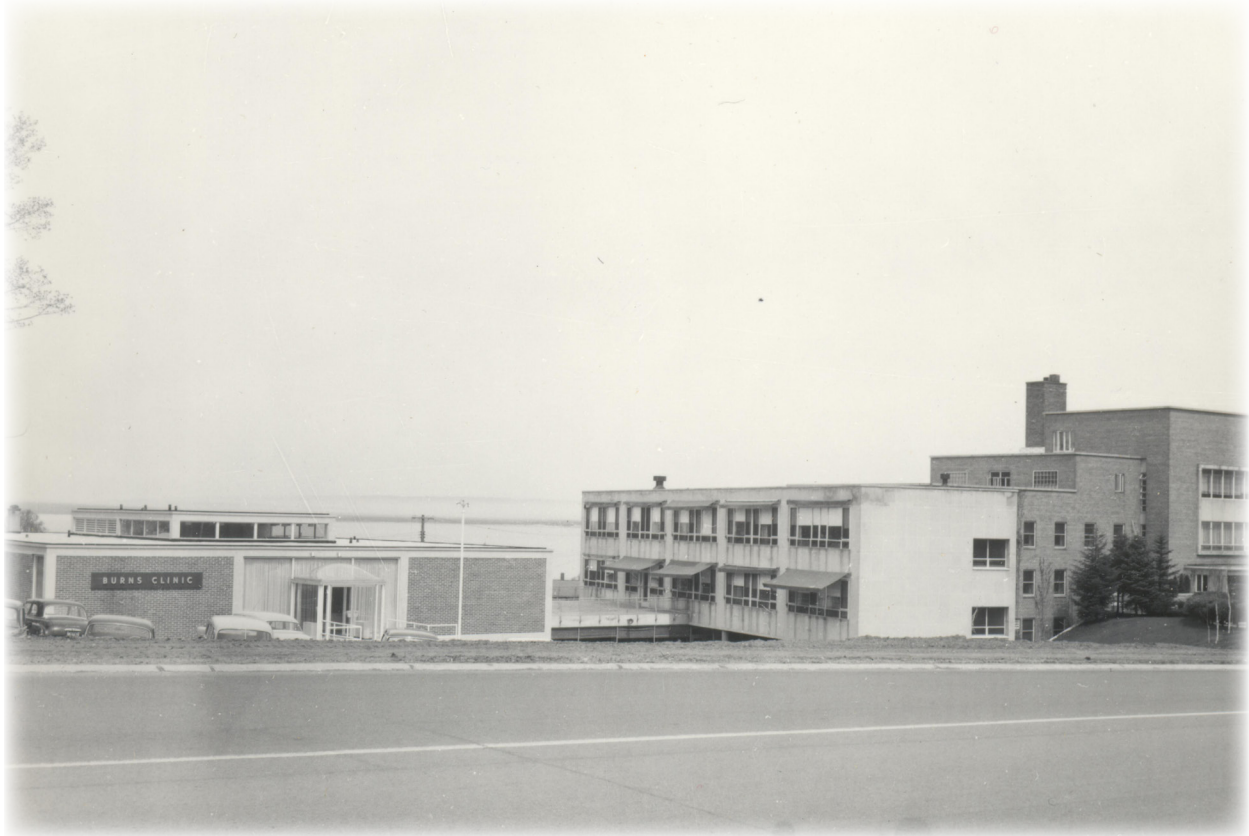
One major difficulty that Dr. Burns faced had nothing to do with fearful patients or disbelieving “old-school” doctors; the year was 1931 and the Great Depression had hit the United States. Many patients could only repay Dr. Burns’ services with chickens, maple syrup, or services of their own. While the economy did temporarily halt the growth of the clinic, Dr. Burns’ dream refused to be defeated and in 1938, seven years after the hiring of Dr. Conway, internist Dr. Benjamin Blum became the second specialist to join the clinic. Soon after Blum’s arrival, the 68-bed Little Traverse Hospital opened its doors on the property Dr. Burns had purchased for that purpose. Over the next five years the clinic grew, adding pediatricians George Maksim and Mary McLeod, urologist A.J Hegener, obstetrician Kathryn Weburg, and internist Harris Lilga.

While Dr. Burns donated the property on which Little Traverse Hospital was built, other donors played a large part in its formation. The following story was taken from *Intensive Caring, The Story of Northern Michigan Hospital*, written by Marci Singer.

In 1937 Mrs. Sally Coleman, a summer resident, visited the Petoskey Hospital to see a sick friend. Once there, she discovered that the stairs were too steep for her to climb and that there was no passenger elevator. Alerted to Mrs. Coleman's dilemma, Dr. Burns left his office and escorted her to the hand-operated freight elevator. She came down the same way. Later, in a bridge game with her three friends, Mrs. Coleman described her visit to the Hospital. "Dr. Burns needs a new hospital." Her friends agreed, and each pledged \$1,000.

Coleman used her contacts well and got in touch with Chicago businessman Joseph Otis, who contacted his friends. Between their donations and other fundraising, \$300,000 was raised to open the doors of Little Traverse Hospital. Dr. Burns served as the chief of staff for the hospital for over 20 years.

It would have been easy at this point for Dr. Burns to take a step back and celebrate his accomplishment. After all, he had been



The first Burns Clinic proper with a staff of 14 physicians

instrumental in bringing a quality hospital and several specialists to his hometown, making many sacrifices along the way. He worked hard to guarantee fair salaries and benefits for his fellow doctors and personally paid for several pieces of medical equipment to lighten the financial burdens on the new hospital. He deserved to relax and enjoy the fruits of his labor. A normal man would have done just that.

But Dr. Burns was a dreamer, a visionary. When Little Traverse Hospital became a reality, he continued to find ways to improve the hometown that he loved. He founded the Burns Foundation in 1947 to promote and fund educational research and community projects. While this foundation helped in many areas—including schools and libraries—one of its most significant contributions was to lay the groundwork for Northern Central Michigan College in 1958. Dr. Burns served on the Board of Trustees for the college until his death nearly 20 years later.



Dr. Dean C. Burns
(Little Traverse Hospital, cornerstone ceremony, August, 1938)

Dr. Burn's Honors, Awards, and Memberships

University of Chicago Alumni Association –
Public Service Citation

Lake Superior State College –
Distinguished Citizen Award

Michigan State Medical Society –
Certificate of Commendation

Michigan Community College Association –
Distinguished Service Award

Petoskey Jaycees Community Service Award

Northern Michigan Medical Society –
(President 1938-39)

Michigan State Medical Society
American College of Surgeons –
(Fellowship 1933) –
(Recipient of Medical Records Honor Award 1933)

Member of Michigan Chapter ACS
International College of Surgeons
Tau Kappa Epsilon
Phi Beta Pi

University Club of Chicago
Petoskey-Bay View Country Club
Walloon Lake Country Club

Board of Trustees North Central Michigan College
Michigan Association Community College Trustees –
(President 1968-1970)

Michigan Coordinating Council for
Public Higher Education 1962-68

Michigan State Tuberculosis Sanatorium Commission
1934-42

Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters
1972

Dr. Burns' interest in education could be seen by anyone who visited his home. Both he and Marcella were avid readers and kept their nightstands piled high with books. The books were not limited to medical tomes; Dr. Burns read fiction, history, science fiction, and many other genres, perhaps as an easily accessible escape from the difficult and often emotionally draining work he did.

In 1954 Dr. Burns saw his boyhood dream come full circle. A two-story extension was constructed on the south side of Little Traverse Hospital where specialists could hold office hours. Burns Clinic, a clinic of specialists first dreamed of nearly 40 years earlier, had developed from Dr. Burns and one ophthalmologist into a facility that offered specialized care by numerous doctors in nearly every area of medicine. Dr. Burns served the first year without salary, knowing the financial difficulties the inaugural year could bring. He needn't have worried; the clinic itself served the community for 45 years before closing down in 1999. The building still holds offices for the many specialists that have been attracted to the Petoskey area through Dr. Burns' dedication.



Dr. Dean C. Burns

Dr. Burns retired in 1962 but continued to give to the community, serving as a trustee at the college, member of Michigan's Coordinating Council for Public Higher Education (1962-68), and president of the Michigan Association of Community College Trustees (1968-70). He received awards and honors from Michigan to Great Britain, including election to the Fellowship Royal Society of Health in 1971 and a resolution by the Michigan Senate in 1978 honoring him as one of Michigan's most illustrious sons. But perhaps one of the most valued was given close to home: in gratitude for all he had given his hometown, Petoskey declared August 16, 1973, Dr. Dean Burns Day.

Dean Burns, father of modern medicine in Petoskey and the surrounding areas, died February 9, 1978. While his clinic has long since closed, his vision for attracting top doctors to the area is still alive. He put his life behind his dream of creating quality medical care for Northern Michigan, continuing to believe when others said it wasn't possible. His contributions in medicine and education have reached far beyond the Petoskey borders and continue to benefit people from all over Michigan and beyond today.



Aerial photo - Northern Michigan Hospital



Dr. Dean C. and Marcella Burns
Portrayed by Bob White and Noreen Tarquini

**Dean C. Burns, M.D., One Of
Our Most Illustrious Sons**

Petoskey has lost one of its most illustrious sons with the death of
Dr. Dean C. Burns.

This man of vision was responsible for Petoskey becoming a medical center. He founded the Little Traverse Hospital and the Burns Clinic, the city's largest employer.

Dr. Burns was also a leader, pusher and financial backer that led to the establishment of North Central Michigan Community College here 20 years ago. He headed the board of trustees from its inception to his death.

He founded the Burns Foundation which over the years has provided funds for the college and other projects in the community.

Dr. Burns was known state and nationally for his medical and organizational ability and over the years was accorded many honors – not just by his friends and neighbors here. Last year the University of Chicago Alumni Association presented him its prestigious Public Service Citation. He was selected from alumni nominees from around the world.

Dr. Burns received the Distinguished Citizen Award of Michigan from Lake Superior State College. The Michigan State Medical Society presented him its highest award for his part in establishing the hospital, clinic and college here.

There were more – the Michigan Community Colleges Association selected him for its Distinguished Service Award not just for what he did here, but for the service he gave the people of the state when he headed this association.

They say a prophet is without honor in his own town. But this hasn't been true with Dr. Burns. People here have been aware of his services for many years and fortunately, they let him know while he was living.

The Jaycees in 1963 selected him as Petoskey's Outstanding Citizen. He was cited for five areas of community service and good citizenship, including: lasting contribution, contribution to general community welfare, participation, leadership and cooperation with individuals and organizations. Certainly those five areas can be used to measure at least part of what an individual does for his community.

In 1973 the clinic and hospital honored him with a two day medical conference marking his 50 years of practice in Petoskey. The mayor proclaimed

Continued

Aug. 15, 1973 as Dean C. Burns Day in Petoskey to kick off the “Founder’s Day” celebration. During this event he was saluted for many things, including donating the land on which the original hospital was built and for serving as its chief of staff for 20 years.

Dr. Burns founded the first clinic here in 1931, eight years after starting practice here. Joining him in the “team approach” to solving medical problems were Dr. Benjamin B. Blum, Dr. William S. Conway and Dr. John Hegener. From this small beginning one of the state’s outstanding clinics evolved, bringing such miracles as heart surgery and treatment one could expect only in metropolitan areas.

To show how far Dr. Burns and those who have followed him have taken us, go back to 1896 when Dr. Burns was born here. He was born at home because the community had no hospital at all.

He has been described accurately as “a giant among men”. Dr. Burns was that and it is impossible to put on paper today all he has meant to this community and to his family.

Thousands of patients, friends and associates have their own thoughts on what he has brought here without knowing the part he or others played. We take these things, unfortunately for granted.

We seldom stop to think that anything good and worthwhile in life is achieved by dedicated persons such as Dr. Burns who are willing to devote so much above and beyond the call of duty.

Dr. Burns could have retired almost two decades ago and still have been recognized for a life of service to his community. But he chose to continue serving and being in the mainstream of what was going on here. Such citizens are rare indeed. We are fortunate in this area for having had Dr. Burns and not just because of what his vision brought here. He was a fine person, a good friend and a man we are all richer for having known.

Petoskey News Review
February 10, 1978



Little Traverse Hospital and Burns Clinic Staff - 1940
Back Row - Dr. Allan Hegener, Dr. Harris Lilga
Front Row - Dr. William Conway, Dr. Dean Burns, Dr. Ben Blum

**Dr. Burns, Hospital, Clinic,
College Leader Dead at 81**

Native Son Became a
'Living Legend' Here

Dean C. Burns, 81, died last night at the hospital which was built here because of his inspiration and leadership.

For more than 20 years, starting in 1939, he was medical director and chief of staff of Little Traverse Hospital, now a division of Northern Michigan Hospitals Inc.

Services will be at 10 a.m. Monday from Emmanuel Episcopal Church with Rev. James Hempstead in charge. Burial will be in Greenwood Cemetery.

Dr. Burns founded the Burns Clinic in 1938 and was its director for many years until becoming director emeritus. He started his medical practice in Petoskey 55 years ago. Dr. Burns also established the Burns Foundation which provided funds for many projects here. Among such beneficiaries was North Central Michigan College which was launched 20 years ago after a foundation study demonstrated its need.

Dr. Burns was elected chairman of the college board of trustees when it opened and held the position since.

He was honored by many organizations for his leadership and vision. Included among these were: University of Chicago Alumni Association Public Service Citation; Lake Superior State College Distinguished Citizen Award; Michigan State Medical Society Certificate of Commendation; Michigan Community College Association Distinguished Service Award; Petoskey Jaycees Community Service Award. Petoskey observed Dean C. Burns Day in 1973 by proclamation of the mayor during a Founders Day Salute staged by Burns Clinic doctors who concluded it with a civic banquet.

Survivors include his wife, Marcella; one son, Dean D. Burns of Petoskey; two daughters, Mrs. Ann Behan of Petoskey and Mrs. Mary McKee of Deerfield Beach, Fla.; 10 grandchildren; two sisters, Mrs. Nita John of Petoskey and Mrs. Heber (Emma) Curtis of Woodside, Calif.

Friends may call at the Stone Funeral Home from 6 to 9 p.m on Sunday.

The family suggests anyone wishing to honor the memory of Dr. Burns, may do so by contributing in his name to either North Central Michigan College; the Emmanuel Episcopal Church, or Little Traverse Division of Northern Michigan Hospitals.

Continued

Dr. Burns was born in Petoskey December 19, 1896, the son of the late Dean Samuel and Emma Christina (Bohm) Burns. He was married on October 29, 1930 to Marcella Ann Whalen.

Dr. Burns' graduated from Petoskey High School in 1915. During the four years of high school he functioned as a combined office boy-student under the preceptorship of the Doctors John and George Reycraft, the family's physicians.

He graduated from the University of Chicago in 1919 with a Bachelor of Science degree, and from Rush Medical College (then a department of the University of Chicago) with the degree of M.D. in 1922. In these years he served as a student instructor in the Department of Materia Medica and Toxicology in the University and Rush, and as Instructor in the same departments in the Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing, in Chicago. He served a combined general and surgical internship at St. Luke's Hospital (Chicago) 1921-1923, returning to Petoskey in June, 1923, to enter the practice of medicine with Doctors John and George Reycraft. He became a member of the staff of the Petoskey Hospital in that year. He did graduate work in surgery at Harvard University in 1930, and Columbia University in 1932 and 1937.

Membership in Medical organizations and other organizations include Northern Michigan Medical Society (president 1938-1939); Michigan State Medical Society; American College of Surgeons (Fellowship 1933; recipient of Medical Records Honor Award 1933); member Michigan Chapter ACS – at one time, counselor; International College of Surgeons; admission by election to Fellowship Royal Society of Health (Great Britain) 1971; Tau Kappa Epsilon; Phi Beta Pi; University Club of Chicago; Petoskey-Bay View Country Club; Walloon Lake Country Club; Board of Trustees North Central Michigan College 1958 - (chairman Study – Feasibility Committee 1956-1958, Chairman Board of Trustees 1958-) member Michigan Coordinating Council for Public Higher Education 1962-1968; member Michigan Association Community College Trustees (president 1968-1970); member Michigan State Tuberculosis Sanatorium Commission 1934-1942; Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters 1972.

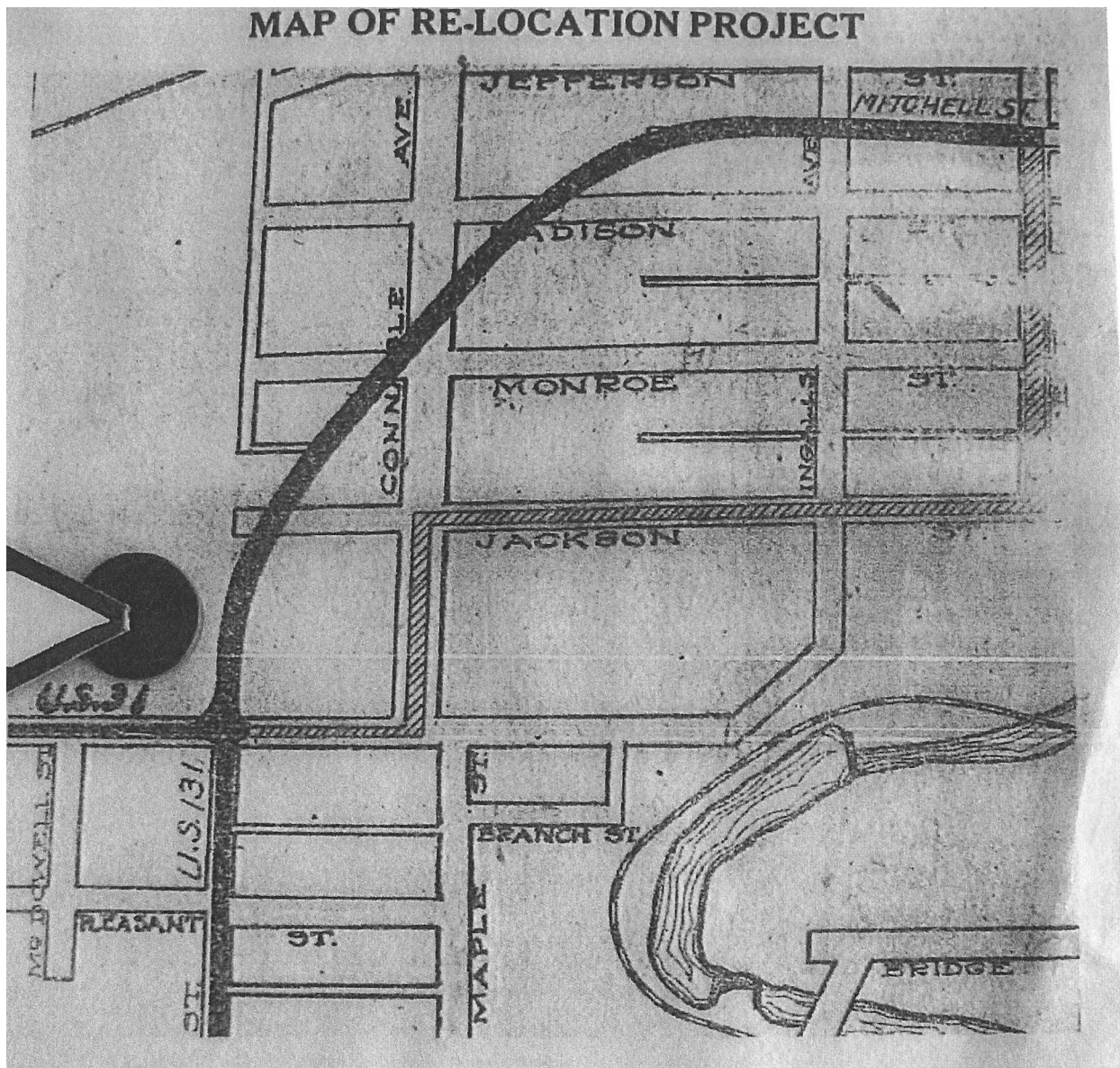
Hospital affiliations: Petoskey Hospital 1923-1939, Petoskey (chief of staff 1931-1939) succeeded by Little Traverse Hospital, 1939 – (co-founder, medical director and chief of staff 1939-1961; director emeritus since 1961.

Founder: 1931 Burns Clinic (now Burns Clinic Medical Center, P.C.), was director 1939-1961; founder and director emeritus 1961. Established Burns Foundation Inc. 1947.

He served in the Medical Enlisted Reserve Corps, U.S. Army, 1918-1919.

Petoskey News Review
February 10, 1978





This map shows the new location of US 31 and 131 from Charlevoix avenue to Liberty street on Petoskey's West Side. The new pavement is marked by the heavy black lines. The old route of the trunklines is shown by cross-hatched marking. Dr. Burns was extremely pleased that the highway was changed to allow easier access for patients and visitors to the new hospital.

**Senate Resolution
Honors Dr. Burns**

Looking 'Em Over
by Jim Doherty

The late Dr. Dean C. Burns has been honored by Resolution No. 420 of the Michigan Senate as one of Michigan's most illustrious sons.

The resolution, offered by Sen. Robert Davis of Gaylord and two colleagues, states among other things "the many degrees and honors he received during his lifetime are diminished by his deeds."

The resolution notes that Dr. Burns started his practice in Petoskey 55 years ago and points to his efforts that led to the establishment of the Burns Clinic, Burns Foundation and North Central Michigan College.

"It cannot be recorded in this limited space and invaluable contributions of this great man," the resolution continues. "He leaves a legacy illuminated by a radiance born of noble aspirations and high endeavor. The lessons of his life, whose pleasant remembrances rob even death of its sadness, leave us a treasure of stimulating influence in the conduct of our own..."

"Resolved by the Senate, that memorial tribute be accorded to the late Dr. Dean C. Burns in recognition of over a half century of distinguished service to the citizens of the community of Petoskey and the State of Michigan..."

An Official copy of the resolution, 11x17 inches in size, has been prepared for the family.

Nellie Roche, former News-Review correspondent who has retired, writes from Summerfield, Fla.:

"I always supposed he (Dr. Burns) was older than I. However, we were in high school together. I lived in Oden and rode the trains to and from school. I can still see him going to Dr. Reycraft's office, his arms full of books, immediately after school.

"On Jan. 28, 1931, I was hit by a car, thrown 30 feet, and taken to the old Petoskey Hospital by the river on Lake st. where I laid five months flat on my back. Many times Dr. Burns was called to my room in the night during this experience. I had compound fractures of both legs and my right one was just hanging – but I am still walking on both."

+++

Dr. Burns has left a great legacy for his family, friends, associates, patients and countless others who never met him but are benefiting and will benefit because of his many contributions. Many will continue into the future, long after all the rest of us living today are gone.

Petoskey News Review
February 28, 1978

Marcella A. Burns, 82

Marcella A. Burns, 82, of Resort Township, died Nov. 16, 1986, at Little Traverse Division, Northern Michigan Hospitals.

Private family services will be held Wednesday in Petoskey.

The former Marcella A. Whalen was born July 15, 1904, in Paris, Mich., the daughter of Daniel and Ann (Byrnes) Whalen. She attended schools in Paris and Big Rapids where she graduated from high school in 1922.

She came to Petoskey and attended and graduated from the nursing school at the Petoskey Hospital, receiving a nursing degree. She practiced nursing in Petoskey.

On Oct. 29, 1930, she married Dean C. Burns, M.D., in Petoskey. The couple always made their home in Petoskey. Dr. Burns preceded her in death on Feb. 9, 1978.

Mrs. Burns was a member of Emmanuel Episcopal Church of Petoskey and was very active in community affairs.

She is survived by: one son, Dean D. Burns of Petoskey; two daughters, Ann Behan of Petoskey and Mary McKee of Deerfield Beach, Fla.; 11 grandchildren; one great-granddaughter; one sister, Mrs. Jerry (Patricia) Koutz of Lake Mecosta.

The family suggest memorials to the Petoskey Garden Club. Envelopes for that purpose may be obtained at the Stone Funeral Home, Petoskey where the family will receive friends from 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 18.

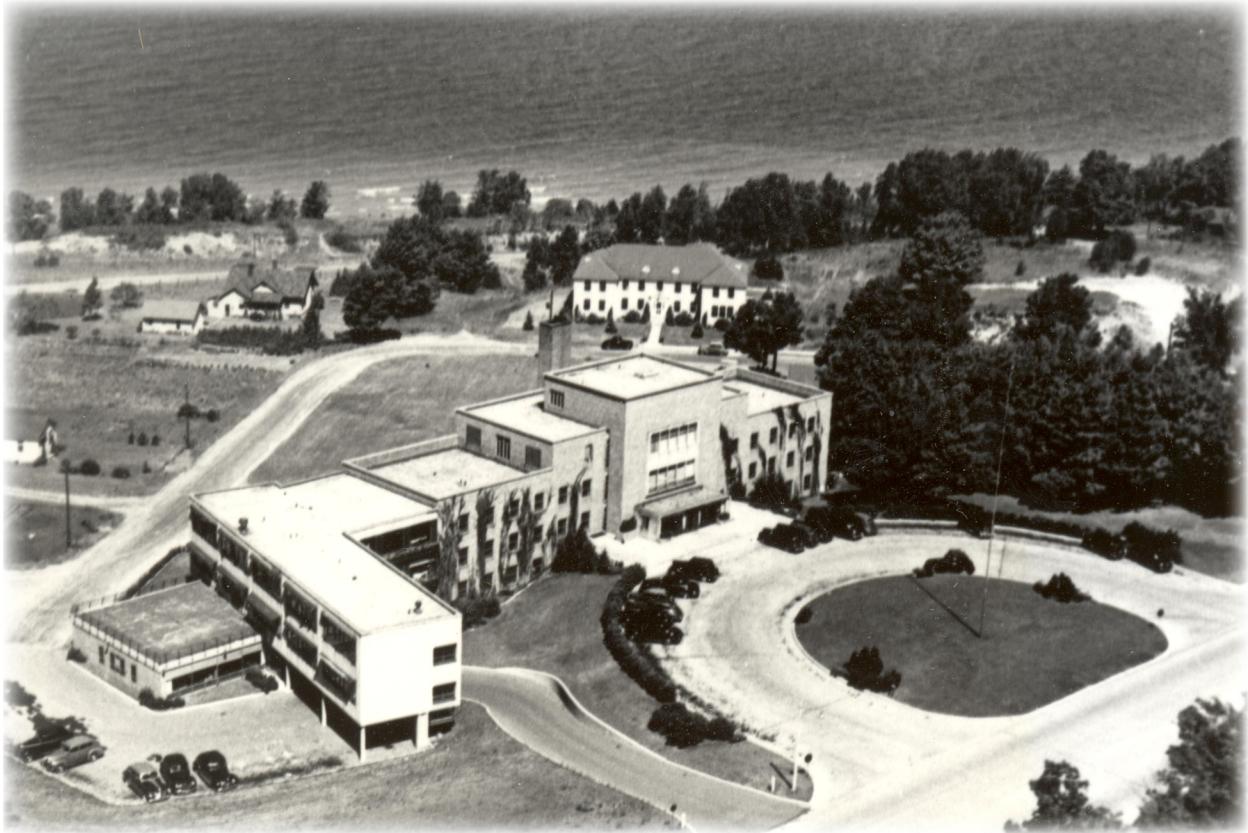
Petoskey News Review
November 17, 1986



Hospital property - before construction



Hospital groundbreaking - May 23, 1938

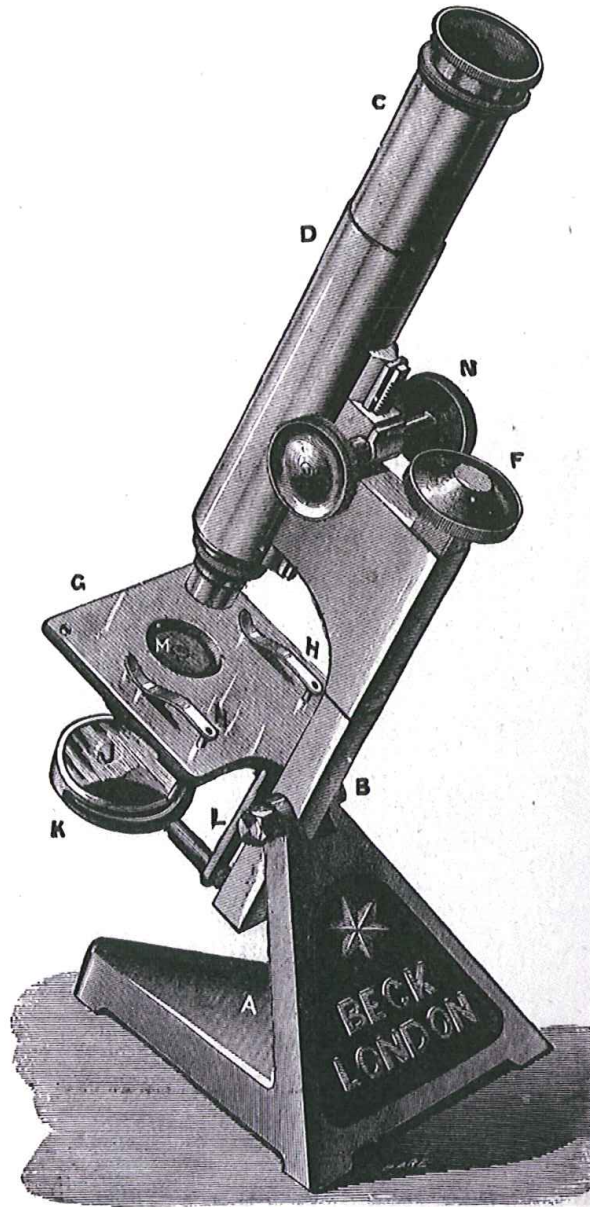


Aerial Photo - Little Traverse Hospital - 1947

Notice the Hospital just has the South wing, the North wing has not been added yet, there is no Clinic building, There is a driveway under the South wing to what appears to be a garage area. The Nurse's home is in the center towards the Lake and there is a home to the left of that.

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