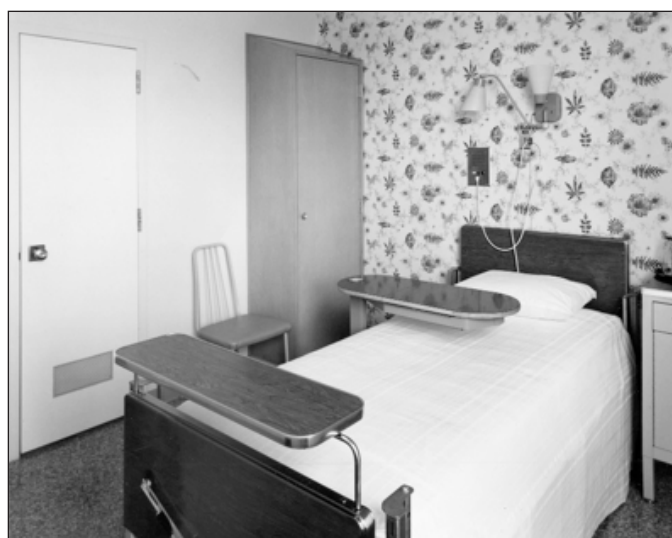


# RETROSPECTIVE

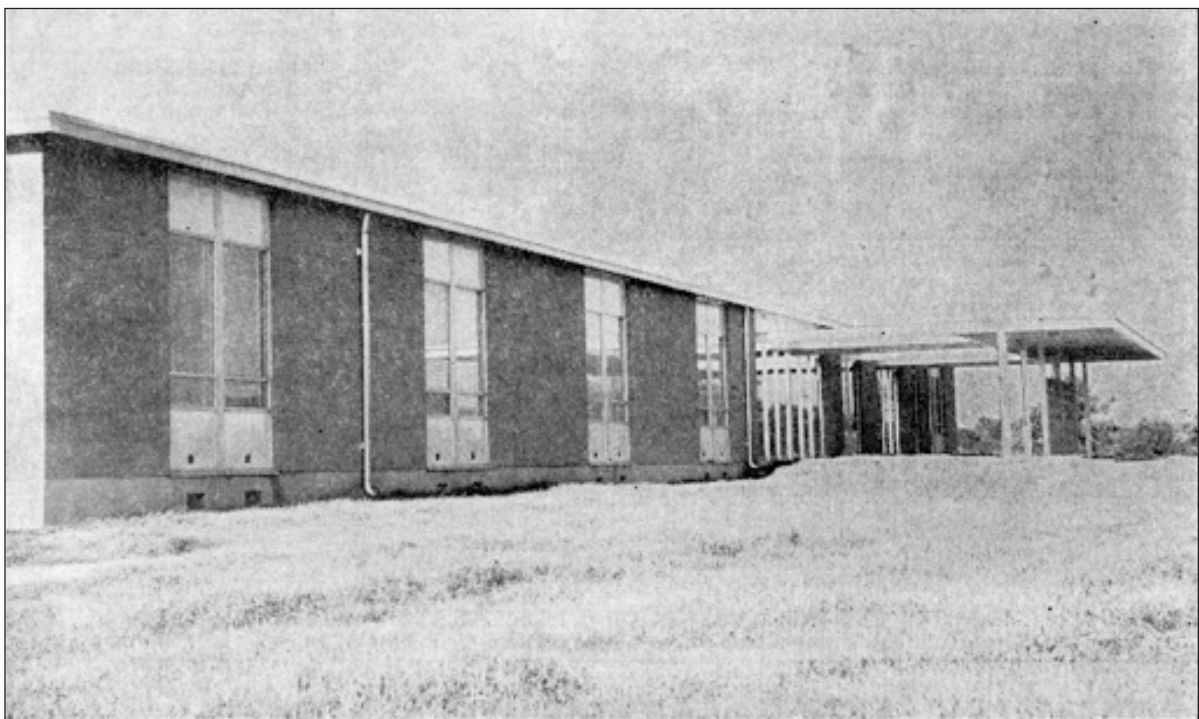
D SECTION

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2009

THE MORGAN COUNTY CITIZEN



BY KATHRYN SCHILIRO  
 INSET PHOTO BY ANGELINA BELLEBUONO  
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## NEW HOSPITAL OPENING

MADISON, Ga., Dec. 31—Morgan County's new hospital will open its doors Friday. The building, costing \$500,000 was financed under the Hill-Burton Act after Morgan County voted a bond issue to pay

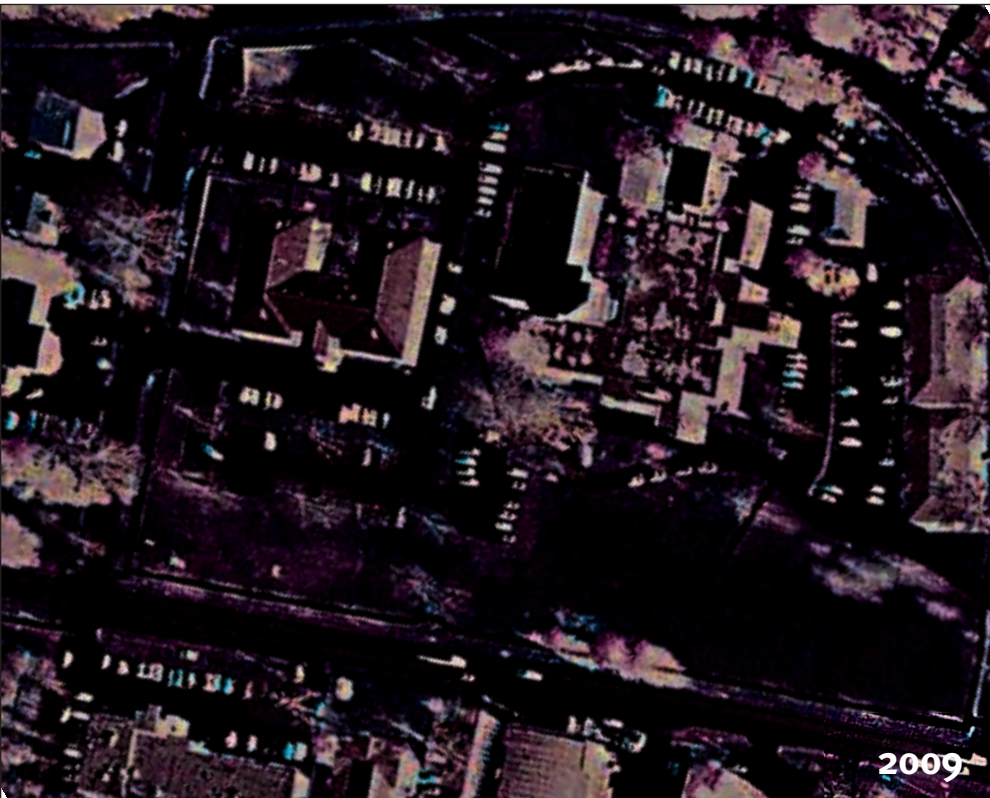
its share of the cost. The hospital is the first to be owned by the county. Formal dedication services are planned in the spring. Elbert Shaw is administrator of the hospital.

# 50 years of healthcare

THE EVOLUTION OF MORGAN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL



1959



2009

**F**ifty years ago Friday, Morgan Memorial officially opened its doors. The then state-of-the-art facility, built in "Canterbury Park on the outskirts of Madison," boasted 26 beds as well as the most up-to-date equipment: "an X-ray machine with an overhead photo time tube; complete air conditioning and heating controlled by the most up to date heat pump; a complete stainless steel kitchen with a heated food service to insure hot meals and a system whereby oxygen is pumped to patient rooms," according to a Dec. 31, 1959 Madisonian article, "Morgan County Opens New Memorial Hospital Friday."

The hospital cost \$500,000, and was financed through the Hill-Burton Act, passed in 1946 as a response to President Truman's call for an improved hospital system. Federal, state and local dollars went in to constructing Morgan Memorial; in fact, Morgan County residents "voted a bond issue" to share in the financial responsibility of building the facility, according to the 1959 article.

Morgan Memorial was the first hospital owned by the county; a private hospital owned by Dr. Clyde McGear, Sr. closed five years prior. The facility was one year in planning, and one year in construction. Scheduled to open in the fall of 1959, opening was delayed due to a steel workers strike earlier that year.

An open house was held on Dec. 27, 1959 and more than 1,000 people attended, according to the Madisonian article. One thing was clear: Morgan County residents were excited about the opening of the needed hospital, a facility the Atlanta Constitution called a "dream come true."

### 1959

Dr. L.K. Lewis was responsible for admitting Morgan Memorial's first patient on New Year's Eve 1959.

A native of Greene County, Lewis moved to Morgan County three months prior to the opening. Establishing his family practice, Lewis also worked at Morgan Memorial as one of the hospital's six doctors.

With the exception of a doctor who functioned as a surgeon, Morgan Memorial's doctors were required to practice varying forms of medicine; specialization was nowhere near as prevalent as it is now.

Lewis himself ran anesthesia during surgeries.

"The doctors did everything there was to do," Lewis said. "There were no emergency room physicians. Each doctor had to rotate emergency duty for a week."

Aside from acting as on-call emergency physicians, the doctors cared for the patients they themselves referred to the hospital (Morgan Memorial consisted, and still does, primarily of patients referred to the facility by local doctors who also work at the hospital), delivered babies, offered pre- and post-natal care all the while maintaining their own practices.

That diversity of work extended to the nursing staff as well.



**DOUBLE TAKE** Patients will come up and talk to Dr. Lewis' portrait, which hangs in the halls of MMH.

"I worked 3 [p.m.] to 11 [p.m.], and there was me and two nurse's aides and an orderly on," former Morgan Memorial nurse Shirley Lancaster said. "Back then we had [to man] the emergency room, the operating room, the delivery room and the nursery. We did all of that; we did our own sterilizations, we did our own central supply...we gave medicine, did the charting."

The cost of health care in Morgan County 50 years ago? Lewis recalled an office visit cost \$3; a house call, \$5; complete obstetrics care was \$75 while solely delivery cost \$50; and circumcision, \$10.

When Morgan Memorial opened, obstetrics care was one of the facility's major functions. The hospital included a delivery room and a nursery (now a nurses' station), and new mothers stayed in the hospital five or six days following childbirth.

"I had a large obstetrics practice," Lewis said. "I delivered probably 2,000 babies in this hospital."

"We had a lot of babies out there at that time," Lancaster said. "It was very different from what it is now."

Currently, Morgan Memorial doesn't offer obstetrics care; the service was abandoned in the late 1980s.

"Some things have changed, some haven't," Lewis, who retired in 2004, said.

When the hospital opened, local funeral homes ran the ambulance service, transporting patients to and from the hospital in hearses. Oftentimes, if a patient was being transferred to another hospital (usually in Atlanta or Augusta, Lewis said), a nurse, sometimes a doctor, would ride in the back of the vehicle with the patient.

See MMH Page 2D



**MMH** from Page 1D

Another change over time, most procedures now are considered out-patient; when Morgan Memorial opened its doors in the 1960s, most medicine practiced at the hospital was considered in-patient.

"I would average 10 to 12 patients at a time [in the hospital]," Lewis said.

Not just at Morgan Memorial, but in medicine overall, Lewis has noticed a shift in diagnostic technology. At present the hospital has the capability to do things like CT scans, MRIs and ultrasounds; when Morgan Memorial opened, the doctors had solely an X-ray machine to work with.

Though he retired five years ago, Lewis admits he can't quite leave medicine; he currently serves on the Morgan County Hospital Authority, the resident voice of experience.

"I sort of missed being connected with the hospital," Lewis said. "Medicine has been my life. This hospital has been my life."

Physically, Morgan Memorial has basically remained the same since its opening in 1960. The hospital underwent one major renovation as well as the addition of the Transitional Care Unit (TCU).

Lewis believes that financial stability and a new physical facility are needed, as are new specialists so that Morgan Memorial can be capable of offering more services

to an ever-growing population.

"The town is growing, the county is growing," Lewis said. "We deserve a modern medical facility."

**2009**

And a "modern medical facility" seems to be what Morgan Memorial's current administration is aiming for.

Considering potential revenues and net revenues, potential expenses and the amount of debt that could be shouldered by the hospital, Morgan Memorial administration elected, earlier this year, to opt for a HUD-based program to fund the building of a new hospital, set to cost \$35 million. Once feasibility studies are complete, representatives of Morgan Memorial will have to go to Washington D.C. to make a case for the funds. Provided that comes through, construction will begin.

Morgan Memorial CEO O.J. Booker is convinced that a new hospital alone won't draw clientele to Morgan Memorial. First things first, Booker wants to keep the focus on patient care, despite any physical changes to the hospital that might be in the works.

"I think what people want is a building full of wonderful, spiritually driven people," Booker said. "People want to know they can trust us, that they're safe, that they know we know what we're doing."



**CHECK OUT THE CARS** Part of the hospital's archives, the exterior of Morgan Memorial as seen on Jan. 27, 1960, nearly a month after the facility opened.

Morgan Memorial is currently operating at 15 percent market share. An increase will only come if the hospital again gains the public's trust, something hard to do especially when it comes to health care.

"We lay hands on people," Booker said. "That's a sacred trust...People are walking around in there, doing for other people. It's just a precious, intimate thing."

Fact of the matter, at least according to Booker, nothing – not even meals – happens at Morgan Memorial without a physician's approval.

"Nothing happens in the hospital without doctors," Booker said. "The hospital is the tool of the

physician. Everything exists because physicians send us their work."

At the same time, Morgan Memorial administration is working to maintain in-house development – concentrating on customer service, complaint resolution, risk management, ensuring everyone has a job description and is fulfilling their duties, and staying on top of what's up-to-date as far as small, rural hospitals – to further increase the hospital's appeal. It's the people that make the hospital, according to Booker. In addition, hospital administration is studying the county, determining what health care services residents want and what can be brought to Morgan

Memorial.

Both Booker and Director of Development and Public Relations Megan Morris highlight the relationship between the hospital and the county. According to Morris, Morgan Memorial is the number two or three employer in Morgan County – it employs 196 people – and has a multi-million dollar stake in the local economy. The hospital is a recruitment tool for attracting new industry and businesses to the county.

More importantly, it's close.

"We hear that all the time, that [patients] couldn't have made it an hour [to Athens] without being stabilized [at Morgan Memorial] first," Morris said.

All of this said, what is Booker's overarching goal for Morgan Memorial? To gain the trust, and therefore business, of Morgan County's citizens.

"We need to have the opportunity to earn that business back," Booker said.

He hopes to reach this goal not by constructing a new building, but through the people who work within it. Booker recalled advice he was given after coming on board as Morgan Memorial's CEO: "Boy, you just take care of the patients, and the hospital will take care of itself."

The official 50-year anniversary of the opening of Morgan Memorial is officially Jan. 1, 2010, but celebrations will take place throughout the year, according to Morris. Stay tuned.

**Obituary**

*Albert Ray Brownfield, Jr., Brigadier General, United States Army, dies on December 13, 2009 at the age of 94.*

Albert Ray Brownfield, Jr. was born on March 29, 1915, the son of Albert Ray and Allie Dee Brownfield. He was delivered by a midwife who arrived in horse and buggy to the ranch six miles from the nearest town in Terry County, Texas. When he was nine the family moved to the town of Brownfield which was founded by his grandfather and where he attended public schools. He completed high school and junior college at the New Mexico Military Institute. He entered the U.S. Military Academy in 1935. He graduated in 1939 and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, Field Artillery, in the U.S. Army. He married Virginia Edgerly Goodwin in 1939, and over the next 15 years they had four children: Barbara, Ray, Bill, and Betsy.

With the United States' entry into the Second World War, then Captain Brownfield was assigned to the newly formed 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion. He became its commanding officer in 1943, led it to Europe in 1944, and fought with it continuously across France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany and Austria from September 1944 to May 1945. The 811th held the southern hinge of the U.S. Army during the Battle of the Bulge, mounted the only two major counter-attacks in the first day of fighting, held its position during eight days of continuous German attacks, destroyed an estimated 100 German tanks, and on December 26 held the left flanks of the U. S. armored column that broke through and relieved the 101st Airborne Division in Bastogne. The 811th spearheaded two attacks that penetrated the German Siegfried Line, liberated a POW and concentration camp in Germany, and accepted the surrender of a German field army at the end of the war. The 811th was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for its war service. Following the war, Ray Brownfield commanded

units in Japan, Alaska, and North Carolina. He was promoted to Brig. General in 1966. He served more than two years in the Vietnam War as Chief of Operations, Military Assistance Command, Viet Nam and later Assistant Division Commander of the 4th Infantry Division. He retired in 1969 as Deputy to the Inspector General of the U. S. Army.

Following retirement, he served as Chief of Staff and later Commander in Chief of the Military Order of the World Wars, a national veteran's organization. In 1972 his wife Virginia died. In 1974 he married Naomi ("Cissy") Campbell Amick and returned to his native Terry County, Texas. There, for the next 30 years, he ran the Red Onion Farm that his father and grandfather had run before him. He played a prominent role in the community, supported the local veterans, and was active in the Texas Masons. There is a statue dedicated to him in the City of Brownfield's Memorial Park. The statue of an eagle was made by Madison artist Tom Prochnow.

General Brownfield is survived by his wife, Cissy and his children Barbara Brownfield Rushing, a resident of Madison, Albert Ray Brownfield, III of Reveille Vineyard, Virginia, William R. Brownfield, U.S. Ambassador to Columbia, Bogotá, Columbia and Elizabeth Brownfield Fay, Seattle, Washington. He is also survived by his five stepchildren, Lon, Alice, Anne, Eugene, and John. He has 10 grandchildren, and seven great-grand children.

A memorial service was held on December 17, 2009 in Liberty, Missouri where he and Mrs. Brownfield were in residence at the time of his death. General Brownfield will be buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery at 1:00 p.m. on February 24, 2010. He lived his life by the West Point motto – "Duty, Honor, Country" – and the West Point honor code – "A man does not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate those who do."

BY SARA LYNN PRITCHETT HOLBERT

Life was once simpler and I find myself longing for that simplicity for my children who are now young adults setting out on their own. Whatever happened to finding enjoyment in the little things or in just being together?

Growing up on a dairy farm in Apalachee in a wonderful family taught me a kind of love that was always enriched during the blessed Christmas season. Though there were many of us, there was always enough love for everyone. I really don't know how daddy and mama managed to keep us all fed and clothed, much less provided with Christmas.

We'd always wait until the day school let out for vacation to put up our Christmas tree which, as I remember it, was always a huge cedar that daddy would cut from our own pasture. Our decorations weren't expensive but were always special to us.

Ornaments that we had made, along with the ones my parents had had for years, were hung gingerly on the tree. Of course, we'd also have lots of gold rope tinsel and icicles that daddy loved to hang one by one. Large, colorful lights, none of the white light stuff for us, hung on the tree and sometimes circled our front porch casting a special glow to

**"Christmas"**

that huge, paper Santa Claus covering the front door. We never thought of any of this as tacky; it was home and we were safe there.

Another special part of the holidays was our Christmas Pageant at Apalachee Methodist Church where I usually was the narrator. The strange thing is we always managed to get the play together without practice every night, the way it seems we have to do today. Back then, when we missed a line or entered a bit late, parents smiled and the show went on. Mama always made me a pretty velveteen jumper and white blouse for this special event.

Probably the memory that is sketched into my mind the most is our Christmas mornings. I never could figure out how Santa Claus knew where we'd chosen for him to place our gifts, but they were always right there in the spots all of us had picked. Every year, Santa brought me a beautiful baby doll, a special china tea set, and one of those 100-crayon boxes of colors with the sharpener on the back. Games, watches, clothes, and bicycles were added over the years, but my baby dolls and tea sets were what I looked most forward to receiving.

All of the special memories I have involve simple acts of love. I remember mama getting me that special velveteen jumper each year. I remember telling daddy that special spot for Santa Claus to leave our gifts in the living room.

I remember the shoebox of fruits, candy, raisins and

nuts that always accompanied our gifts from Santa. We'd nibble from that box for days.

I remember laying out all my gifts on the bed, as we all did, so anyone stopping by could see how blessed we were. My Uncle Cap always came by just for that reason, and he seemed as happy about what we'd received as we did.

I remember mama and my brother Gary decorating Miss Elizabeth's Christmas tree when she was no longer able.

I remember mama, daddy, and granny rounding up empty coffee cans, tinfoil, and poinsettias to make flower pots to take to the cemetery for relatives that had gone on to be with the Lord.

I remember buying mama a Christmas corsage at Bailey's 5 and 10 on Main Street.

As I write this, I wonder what memories my children will have. I want them to remember more than the fast pace we find ourselves in these days. Life was slower and simpler when I was a child and we had time to make memories. Our memories revolved around the family and doing for others, not parties, overspending, or one-upping others with the decorations. I pray that whatever else they remember, our two children have had instilled into their hearts the true meaning of Jesus' love and love for others like my parents instilled in us. Christmas really is all about love and making the world a better place. Merry Christmas and God bless you all.

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