

KENNEWICK GENERAL HOSPITAL

"A SYMBOL OF WHAT A COMMUNITY . . . CAN DO"

Created by Barbara J. Kubik, well respected local historian

"No other problem is more important to us than the health of each person in the community. . . From the cradle to the grave, a hospital is our protection in time of need. . . "

And with those words at the Riviera Supper Club on July 1, 1949, Kennewick attorney Hugh Horton kicked off the \$300,000 community-wide fund drive to build Kennewick General Hospital¹.

As early as 1941, the Kennewick Chamber of Commerce had investigated the possibility of federal assistance to construct a community hospital in Kennewick. Due to war-time shortages of construction materials and medical personnel and equipment, the Public Health Service turned down the Chamber's request². In the fall of 1943, the Chamber of Commerce redoubled their efforts to build a hospital in Kennewick, using funding provisions in the "Lanham Act."

The Lanham Act of 1941 (HR 10412) allocated \$150,000,000 of federal money for housing, community facilities, and improvements in communities impacted by the nation's defense programs. The Federal Works Agency was authorized to carry out the provisions of the Lanham Act³. The Federal Works Agency (FWA) had been established in the spring of 1939 to consolidate a number of agencies that dealt with "public works," including health, education, and welfare programs. In 1953, the FWA became known as the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare⁴.

Kennewick was certainly one community impacted by the nation's defense work. In the spring of 1943, the federal government began construction of the "Hanford Engineer Works" (HEW) just outside of Richland. The HEW was a massive plutonium production complex that would build components for the atomic bomb. HEW scientists, technicians, and construction workers poured into the small agricultural towns in the Columbia Basin. The influx of workers strained the towns' law enforcement, social services, education, businesses, and housing. Kennewick's community leaders felt that because the HEW was a federal defense project, it was the federal government's responsibility to provide some of the funding necessary to alleviate the problems the soaring population caused in Kennewick.

The Chamber of Commerce worked quickly to coordinate planning, federal funding, and community support. Under the terms of the proposed grant from the Lanham Act and the Federal Works Agency, the FWA would provide the funds to build and equip the hospital and the community would provide the site. A "local committee" investigated three potential sites for the proposed hospital, and by December, had chosen the "former rodeo grounds," a 12-acre site just south of the high school.

Lin Bissell, a Yakima architect familiar with EWA regulations met with the Chamber of Commerce to present his plans for a 50-bed hospital. The plan would meet FWA requirements, serve a population of 27,000 people, and have the potential for expansion. Bissell estimated the hospital would cost \$80,000 to build, plus \$11,000 to equip, and \$7,500 for x-ray equipment⁵.

The weekly Kennewick COURIER-REPORTER diligently reported the progress of the grant application and the architect's plans through federal offices in Seattle and San Francisco during the winter of

1943-44. Approval for the entire project would have to come from numerous federal agencies, including the Public Health Service, the Public Building Administration, and the Federal Works Agency (FWA).

On October 7, 1943, the Chamber of Commerce created the Kennewick Hospital Association (KHA); it would be the Association's responsibility to raise the money necessary to purchase the site the Chamber had selected and to raise any additional money necessary for the project⁶. The KHA called on Colonel Franklin T. Matthias, the wartime commander for the Hanford Engineer Works, in the hope he could use his influence to expedite Kennewick's application for a hospital through the halls of the federal agencies.

In March of 1944 the community learned that through the Lanham Act, the federal government would fund one-half of the construction costs for the proposed hospital. The total cost had escalated to \$350,000; Kennewick's share would be \$175,000, a seemingly impossible sum for the Community to raise⁷. Even Matthias was stunned. On March 29, he noted in his JOURNAL that the FWA was "out of order" if it expected Kennewick to raise \$175,000. That, he wrote, was an "*impossible situation*." Matthias believed the Lanham Act was a vehicle to 'relieve towns of the excess burdens due to the war effort' and he urged the KHA to temper their proposal with a smaller hospital or a temporary facility, or to ask the FWA to reconsider the grant⁸.

School superintendent E. S. Black, clothing store owner Urban Keolker, and businessman Paul G. Richmond were three of the small group of determined men who continued to meet with Colonel Matthias, as well as state and federal officials, in an effort to locate the funds they needed. On April 27, 1944, the COURIER-REPORTER carried the headline -- "**Kennewick's New Hospital Now Seems Assured**". The FWA's regional office in San Francisco agreed to increase the grant to \$235,000, and to loan the KHA an additional \$80,000 for 20 years at 3%! The KHA would still have to provide the site and to raise \$50,000 for construction costs and operating expenses⁹. In mid-August, 1944, the regional FWA office in San Francisco sent Kennewick's application to Washington DC for final approval.

On March 27, 1944, the Kennewick Hospital Association filed their Articles of Incorporation with the state of Washington. The Articles clearly laid out the purpose of the organization, that of "owning, maintaining, and operating a general hospital." The nine-member governing Board of Trustees serving until September of that year included Reverend John B. Coan, of the Kennewick Methodist-Episcopal Church, Urban Keolker, Mrs. John Ferguson, J. R. Ayers (Hover rancher), Guy Story (Highlands farmer), Mrs. Harry Linn (a nurse and the former owner of one of Kennewick's private hospitals), Arthur W. Campbell, attorney Charles Powell, and George A. Purdy (Pacific Power and Light)¹⁰.

The KHA refiled their Articles of Incorporation on November 1; Paul Richmond replaced Guy Story on the new Board of Trustees, which would serve until March of 1945. Attached to the November filing was the Association's by-laws. The by-laws gave a name to the hospital, Kennewick General Hospital, and it outlined membership in the Association. Membership in the KHA was made up of a select group of local civic organizations, including six granges, six fraternal organizations and their affiliates, American Legion posts, the school district, and the city council. The KHA would be made up of 24 to 40 members; two-thirds would be from these "approved" organizations, and one-third from 'at-large positions.' The Trustees would approve the list of organizations at each annual meeting. Each organization could select their representative in whatever manner they chose.

ARTICLES V and VI detailed the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees as ". . . *immediate charge and direction of all the matters pertaining to the organization, management, direction, and operation of the Hospital,*" including the "*manner in which the Hospital shall be placed in operation . . .*"¹¹

The Kennewick Hospital Association's by-laws clearly defined the hospital's operational procedures, including personnel, purchasing, and community relations, and the Association's responsibilities to the new hospital.

On August 3, the federal census bureau released new figures for Kennewick's population. These figures reflected the feelings of Matthias, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Kennewick Hospital Association that Kennewick had been deeply impacted by the Hanford Engineer Works, and that the community deserved federal assistance for its schools, social services, and hospital. The records showed that in 1940, Kennewick's population stood at 1,918; four years later, it had jumped to 5,248, or an increase of 327%! Because of the wartime secrecy of the Hanford Engineer Works, the census figures for Benton County were not released¹². However, in October, the COURIER-REPORTER noted there were 10,312 registered voters in Benton County, compared with 6,240 in 1940¹³.

On Wednesday, October 25, 1944, the office of Congressman Hal Holmes notified the KHA the federal government had approved Kennewick's application for a 50-bed hospital. The grant to construct and equip the facility now totaled \$350,000! Kennewick would still need to raise \$35,000 to \$50,000 to purchase a site, to provide for "expendable purchases" (medicine, bedding, food), and for the first year's operating expenses. A large portion of that money had already been pledged, and donors were urged to drop their cash contributions by Harold G. Fyfe's insurance office¹⁴. The lengthy and complicated application process that began on July 1, 1943 had come to fruition, and Kennewick finally seemed assured of a community hospital.

The Kennewick Hospital Association, architects, and federal officials continued to meet throughout December, then in January, February, and March of 1945 to complete the necessary revisions to the plans and to set up the necessary financial arrangements. Bids for construction were called for, and on April 26, 1945, 20 bids were opened in Washington DC. Unfortunately, the lowest bid was \$43,500 over the \$350,000 grant. Urban Keolker, Paul Richmond, and Herb Henne met with federal officials in Seattle to consider the next step¹⁵. COURIER-REPORTER editor Rolfe Tuve used his editorial column and the front page of his paper to urge residents to write to state's congressional delegation to ask for their assistance and support. Wrote Tuve, ". . . *Benton County is the only major county in the state without a hospital for civilian population . . . Our wartime population is still four times the pre-war figures*"¹⁶.

No one in Kennewick dreamed that as the war drew to a close on the European front and as Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945, that the FWA might withdraw their \$350,000 grant for Kennewick's hospital. But on May 31, residents were stunned to read that "*Because of the radically changed war picture, the Federal Works Agency has sent word to the Kennewick Hospital Association that the offer of a \$350,000 grant for a federal hospital here has been withdrawn*"¹⁷. Tuve lauded the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce, and editorialized that "*Every evidence points to the fact that Kennewick will grow steadily. . . in the post-war period. Our excellent school system provides one of the cornerstones for that growth. A good hospital will form another. We need the hospital--let's get it!*"¹⁸.

The Kennewick Chamber of Commerce and the KHA had worked too long to give up now, and the two organizations immediately explored alternative sources of funding, assistance from the state of Washington, and a change of plans to a smaller, 20 to 30-bed hospital or a maternity or convalescent-type hospital. The latter two possibilities could be built with the modest funds the area had raised as their share of the original federal grant application. However, the most hopeful alternative appeared to be the creation of a "public hospital"¹⁹.

In the mid-1940's, the state legislature began to reflect social and political changes on the national level as Congress moved from temporary, emergency relief programs to more permanent, long-range social programs for health, education, and welfare. There was a growing realization of the need to rebuild the nation's health care facilities and educational programs that had been badly neglected during the Depression and the war years²⁰.

In early 1945, Representative Ulric S. Ford, a doctor from District 24 (Clallam, Jefferson, and Mason Counties) introduced House Bill #47 ("Public Hospital Districts") into the Washington State Legislature. The purpose of Ford's bill was to "*authorize the establishment of Public Hospital Districts which would own and operate hospitals and to supply hospital service for the residents of such districts and other persons. . . in counties having less than 25,000 population.*"²¹

Ford's 14-page bill was a carefully thought-out, detailed set of instructions to guide a county through the process of setting up a public hospital district, then to guide the hospital district's governing body through the establishment of their public hospital. SECTION 6 of the bill laid out the district's power to ". . . *make a survey of existing hospital facilities. . . to construct. . . hospital facilities. . . to raise revenue by the levy of an annual tax. . . not to exceed three (3) mills. . .*" SECTION 7 stated that the commissioners would "*appoint a superintendent, who shall be appointed for an indefinite time and be removable at the will of the Commission.*" Such a Superintendent "*shall be the chief administrative officer of the Public Hospital and shall have control of the administrative functions of the said hospital*".²²

A careful reading of Ford's "Public Hospital District Bill," and then of the minutes of the Board of Commissioners of the Kennewick Public Hospital District indicate the three newly elected commissioners used the bill as the operational manual for their new hospital district and the hospital itself.

In June, E. S. Black, J. R. Ayers, and Harry Owens directed the 'signature campaign' on petitions to create a 'public hospital district' in the eastern part of Benton County. Tuve urged his readers to "*sign the petition with a will*".²³ But as the residents of Benton County soon found out, there was a flaw in the Ford's bill. The Benton County Commissioners were forced to deny the Kennewick Hospital Association their proposed public hospital district because the county had more than the 25,000 population that Ford's bill addressed²⁴.

For the next six months, the Kennewick Hospital Association searched for ways to build their hospital. They met with the FWA in Seattle, addressed concerned citizens' questions, and met in consultation with the Chamber of Commerce. In January, 1946, Rolfe Tuve addressed the need for a hospital in his first editorial of the new year, and again in a subsequent review of the Chamber of Commerce's work in 1945. "*It was not successful in securing a hospital for Kennewick. This in spite of the fact that a tremendous amount of effort was expended. In many small things there was a certain amount of success. In how many ways the Chamber failed we do not wish to stand in judgment*"²⁵.

During the year, the Kennewick Hospital Association explored the option of leasing the 150-bed hospital at the now-abandoned Pasco Naval Air Station, but apparently, it was an option that was never concluded²⁶. A year later, Harriet Thompson opened the 25-bed privately-owned Virginia Lee Hospital in Kennewick. The hospital, at 605 West Kennewick Avenue, specialized in "*obstetrical, convalescent, and medical care.*" Virginia Lee Hospital remained open for a few months and then closed. In November, the Kennewick Hospital Association considered negotiating a lease with the building's owner, Dudley K. Randall, and reopening the facility.²⁷

Throughout the 1940's, even as their own dreams of a hospital faded farther into the background, Kennewick residents continued their generous financial support for health-related issues, including the March of Dimes, the American Red Cross, TB stamps, and Easter seals. They donated money to the Shriner's Hospital in Spokane, and money, supplies, and Christmas gifts to the veterans' hospital in Walla Walla. Churches, civic organizations, and residents helped several area children who needed expensive, life-saving surgery. People signed up for Red Cross First Aid courses, for child care courses, and for 'TB care courses.' When home nursing care was not an option, they traveled to Pasco, Walla Walla, Yakima, and Seattle for surgery and hospital care. Local doctors and the Parent-Teacher's Association (PTA) offered children pre-school check-ups and immunizations. The county TB association provided mobile x-ray units for lung check-ups.

Kennewick wanted a hospital, and they desperately needed a hospital. Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Pasco was often filled to overflowing, and Kadlec Hospital in Richland was open only to employees of the Hanford Engineer works or residents of Richland. In addition, it was a long, time-consuming trip between any of the three cities. Traffic congestion could stretch any automobile trip to 45 minutes or more. The 40-member Kennewick Hospital Association remained active in a search to find an answer to the question 'how to find the necessary funds to build a hospital to serve the ever-growing population?' The nine-member KHA Board of Trustees was now made up of six "old-timers," including Arthur Campbell Charles Powell, J. R. Ayers, Paul Richmond, Urban Keolker, and Rev. John B. Coan. Over the last three years, E. S. Black, Mrs. Pat Owens, and Francis Ludlow had replaced Purdy, Ferguson, and Linn.

On February 20, 1947, E. S. Black reported to the Kennewick Chamber of Commerce that an amendment to the Ford Bill (HB 47) would now permit Benton County to establish a public hospital district²⁸.

In October, the Kennewick City Council was drawn into lengthy negotiations with the KHA, the Kennewick School District, and the Rodeo Association over the old 12-acre rodeo grounds just south of the high school²⁹. The city needed the land for housing and recreational facilities, the school needed it for temporary classrooms, and the KHA still held out hopes for building a hospital on the 12-acre property. In December, the Kennewick School District began negotiations with the Federal Housing Administration and the War Assets Administration to acquire the "South Trailer Park" along 10th Avenue and South Auburn Street for temporary classrooms. Once again, the negotiations with the federal government involved the school district, the Rodeo Association, and the KHA. If the school district could acquire the South Trailer Park, the school board proposed to dispose of a portion of the property, through sale or trade, to the KHA for a community hospital.³⁰

The land in question, the South Trailer Park, occupied approximately one-half of the southeast quarter of Section 1, Township 8 N, Range 20 E. In 1943, the land had been owned by Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Struthers of Pasco. In a series of condemnation suits filed in November 1943 and April 1944, the federal government acquired approximately 39 acres³¹ of Struthers' property which they developed into the South Trailer Park with 11 bath and laundry houses, streets, lighting, and garbage, and trailer pads with electrical, water, and sewer hookups.³²

Following World War II, the federal government set up a number of programs and agencies to deal with their wartime surplus property, including the Surplus War Property Administration (1944) and the War Assets Administration (1946). By July 1, 1947, all of these 'surplus property' agencies had merged into the War Assets Administration (WAA).³³

On March 24, 1948, E. S. Black, acting for the Kennewick School District, and J. Sheldon Lowery, acting for the WAA, signed the Quitclaim Deed for 17 acres along 10th Avenue and South Auburn Street. The school district paid \$1.00 for property valued at close to \$16,150.³⁴

On March 11, headlines in the Kennewick COURIER-REPORTER read "**TO VOTE ON HOSPITAL PLAN**". The Kennewick Hospital Association announced plans to prepare and circulate petitions asking the county commissioners to place the issue of a public hospital district before the voters during the November (1948) general election. The ballot was to carry the proposal, the proposed hospital district boundaries, and the names and qualifications of those proposed for election as the hospital district's first directors, J. R. Ayers, Glen Felton, and Francis Ludlow.

The article assured readers that due to recent negotiations between the school district, the KHA, the federal government, and the Rodeo Association, a site had been made available on the corner of South Auburn Street and Tenth Avenue. A "*very small tax levy*" would finance the early days of the "Kennewick Public Hospital District".³⁵

By mid-May, the petitions were in circulation, as was one to create the Prosser Public Hospital District to the west. The Republican Woman's Club, the Pre-School Mothers, the PEO, and the Methodist Woman's Society directed the petition campaign. Interested parties could also pick up a petition at Urban Keolker's Men's Clothing Store³⁶.

On August 5, a "Notice of Hearing" appeared in the COURIER-REPORTER. The Benton County Commissioners had received and accepted the petition "*for the formation of a Public Hospital District in Benton County*" and planned to hold a hearing for the same on August 16. Additional news articles that month detailed the boundaries of the three "commissioner districts," and the names of the three commissioners--for District 1, Francis M. Ludlow, for District 2, J. R. Ayers, and for District 3, Glen Felton.³⁷

The election was held on November 2, and when the ballots were counted, the Kennewick Public Hospital District was formed, 2,681 in favor, and 134 opposed.³⁸ The year closed with a new mayor in Kennewick, Urban Keolker, who had worked for so long to bring a hospital to Kennewick, and with the Chamber of Commerce voting the new hospital as one of the community's 'most significant developments.'

The Kennewick Public Hospital District Board of Commissioners ("Commissioners") held their first meeting on December 1. According to SECTION 6(f) of the Ford Bill, a public hospital district was entitled to a portion of the county's tax revenues; the Kennewick Public Hospital District was entitled to 1% of the \$15 million of taxable property in Benton County, or \$150,000. At the next general election (November 1950), the Commissioners could ask the voters to approve a bond levy for the actual construction of the hospital³⁹.

By the spring of 1949, the Commissioners had hired the Spokane firm of Whitehouse and Price to draw up the plans for the new 50-bed hospital. Whitehouse and Price had designed other hospital facilities, and was currently designing buildings for both the University of Washington and Washington State University.⁴⁰

In compliance with HB 47, the Commissioners hired Page Carter as the hospital's first "director." Carter was a Pasco resident with 14 years of hospital experience. He was the owner of Carter Clinical Laboratory in Pasco and had recently leased space in the Bateman Building in Kennewick for a second

lab. According to the COURIER-REPORTER, Page proposed to donate half of his office space for Kennewick General Hospital's "fund-drive headquarters." Room 19 in the Bateman Building, on the corner of today's Kennewick Avenue and Cascade Street, was the hospital's first headquarters.⁴¹

A small part of the fund drive would raise money for the fund drive itself; the majority of the money raised would go for the actual construction of the hospital. Donors could designate which fund drive they wished to contribute to, and newspaper articles and advertisements made it clear where the money from each fund-raising activity was going. The fund drive began in earnest as the Commissioners explored the idea of claiming the \$55,000 in pledges made to the Kennewick Hospital Association in 1943.⁴²

Preliminary work by Whitehouse and Price indicated that a 50-bed hospital would cost approximately \$450,000. One-third of that (\$150,000) would come from county taxes. The community would need to raise \$300,000 if the hospital was to be completed before the next general election, when the Commissioners could ask the voters to approve a bond issue. The hospital would have an operating room, an emergency room, and a maternity ward. The one-story wings housing the patients would have radiant heat and air conditioning. The kitchen, laundry room, and storerooms would be located in the basement.⁴³

In early May, the Commissioners appointed longtime community resident and activist Alfred C. Amon, fund drive chairman. Said Amon, "*There never was a place that needed a hospital as badly as Kennewick. . . We have realized and worked towards this end for many years. . . This is the largest community project ever undertaken in Benton county and will require everyone's help. .*"⁴⁴

At the same time, labor leader and KHA member, John L. Hofmaster, proposed a daring fund-raising activity that would eventually earn the hospital district money, publicity, and community goodwill. Hofmaster suggested that the local carpenter's union volunteer to build a home that would be furnished by Kennewick businesses. The Commissioners could raffle the home off for \$10 per ticket! In the housing-poor Tri-Cities area, such a raffle would certainly be popular! Carter began to talk with local labor unions and business people about Hofmaster's proposal.⁴⁵

Carter urged the Kennewick Hospital Association to reactivate in order to act as the fund-raising arm of the public hospital district. On June 22, the first meeting of the reactivated Kennewick Hospital Association was called to order by presiding chair, Urban Keolker. In attendance were most of the nine-member

KHA Board of Trustees and representatives of 15 organizations, all of them from the original KHA 'approved' list of civic, fraternal, and professional organizations. Carter discussed the hospital district's fund raising plans, and assured the KHA that it should cost no more than \$10,000 to conduct the fund-raising campaign to build the hospital. The \$10,000 would go for paid staff, office space and equipment, advertising, mailing, and fund raising activities.⁴⁶

Carter showed the KHA the plans for the house to be built with donated labor and materials. Local businesses had already donated much of the lumber, glass, plumbing, and wiring, furnishings and appliances; Glen Nagley had donated a lot for the house in his new development, "Nagley Gardens." At this point, each person making a \$5.00 contribution to the fund drive would receive one raffle ticket. This raffle would be one of the most-often discussed issues of the entire two-year fund drive, as local citizens, the KHA, and the Commissioners searched for a fair and profitable way to sell raffle tickets.

The KHA appointed Page Carter superintendent to act for the KHA *"in all matters pertaining to the services of administration"*.⁴⁷ One week later, the KHA passed two important resolutions. One stated that *"upon completion of the fund drive, the KHA will make available all funds to the Kennewick Public Hospital District to build a hospital."* The second stated that the *"KHA will give recognition to the Kennewick Public Hospital District for the assistance they will give the Kennewick Hospital Association with the fund drive; in return for this recognition, the KHA will assume responsibility for all other expenditures incurred with the fund drive"*.⁴⁸

The KHA Board of Trustees and the Kennewick Public Hospital District Commissioners began to meet together to iron out the details of fund-raising activities, of Carter's responsibilities, and of Whitehouse and Price's blueprints for the hospital.

What has often puzzled people is why the Commissioners and the KHA did not go to the federal government for financial assistance. The KHA had almost a decade of experience in negotiating with the Public Health Service and the FWA for grant monies and an approved hospital plan. In 1946, the federal government had amended the Public Health Service Act to *"authorize grants to the States for surveying their hospitals. . . for planning construction of additional facilities, and to authorize grants to assist in such construction"*.⁴⁹ The amendment, called the Hill-Burton Act (the Hospital Survey and Construction Act) was further amended so that by 1949, there was \$150 million available to the states for hospital surveys and construction. The federal government would pay up to two-thirds of the costs of these projects.⁵⁰

Perhaps fund-drive chairman Alfred Amon best expressed the views of the community when he said *" . . . the proposal for federal funds might be all right, but that whether federal funds are obtained or not, the community must be in a position to match the funds"*.⁵¹ Later, Amon would add, *"This drive is community sponsored and directed, and it is definitely a community responsibility"*.⁵² Carter expressed much the same sentiments¹ and in his July 1 address to the "Kick-Off Dinner," attorney Hugh Horton echoed these thoughts when he said that the hospital *"was a problem for Kennewick to meet and handle if we are to obtain our rightful status as a great city"*.⁵³

The hospital association had worked long and hard to fund a hospital with federal monies in the early 1940's, but despite all of their careful work, the money was withdrawn when the war ended. Perhaps it did not seem worth the effort to cut through the bureaucratic red tape on the 'off-chance' there might be some federal grant monies available.

And Kennewick seemed determine to build this hospital themselves, with their own money, their own architects, and in their own way. It was a matter of community pride for each community leader, doctor, business owner, labor union member, and family member.

On July 1, the KHA, 100 local business men and women, and the Commissioners officially kicked off the fund-drive campaign with a "Kick-Off Dinner" at Kennewick's Riviera Supper Club. The goal was to raise \$300,000 in two months. Committees would reach out to the granges, churches, commercial interests, and private citizens, asking everyone to dig deep into their pockets and help raise the money needed to build the hospital.⁵⁴ County tax monies would add another \$150,000 to the building fund. Editorials and advertising in the city's newspapers urged residents to support the hospital fund drive. And in truth, Kennewick General Hospital was built by the community. The money came in in nickels and dimes, in \$250 contributions from some of the city's leading citizens, and from churches and clubs. The Highlands Men's Club and the Lutheran Daughters of Reformation each donated \$100; the First Lutheran Church contributed \$315 that summer. There were concerts and circuses, rummage sales,

dances and baseball games, and raffles and auctions. Charles Zakaib was a well-known Richland baritone soloist. His concert in June earned \$445.10 for the fund drive campaign. A woman in Pasco won an electric mixer in a contest; she raffled the mixer off to her friends, and donated the money to the hospital fund.

Arrangements were made with the musicians' union to allow local musicians hold "jam sessions" at the Riviera Club on Saturday nights. These musicians had already played late-night gigs in the area supper clubs and dance halls, and were now donating their time and talent to night jam sessions, playing as long as there were people to listen and dance. Money from the jam sessions was donated to the hospital.⁵⁵

On August 15, radio talk-show host and musician Bud Alden began a marathon radio broadcast from the front window of Washington Hardware on Kennewick Avenue. Alden would talk, play, sing, and hold guest interviews for as long as he could. In the end, his radio show marathon ran for 110 hours, 21 minutes, and 8 seconds, earning \$19,000 for the fund drive. Local newspapers made much of the marathon, with news articles and photographs of Alden and his family shopping for coffee, of Alden getting a pre-marathon physical, and of Alden resting up.⁵⁶

During the summer, the KHA and the Commissioners had to deal with two serious problems. First, the fund drive campaign was going much slower than anyone anticipated it would. By August, it was apparent that the \$300,000 dollars could not be raised by the campaign's end on September 9. Secondly, there were numerous rumors about the well-paid, professional fund-raising staff working out of the Kennewick Public Hospital District's headquarters in the Bateman Building. While the Commissioners and the KHA denied the rumors in their minutes and in the newspapers, it was true that Carter and some of the office personnel were paid; Carter was earning \$300 per month, and the secretary, about \$55.00 per month.⁵⁷

Work continued on the house as Bill Gravenslund and John Hofmaster coordinated the crews of skilled union craftsmen who volunteered their time and knowledge. House painters from Pasco Local No. 427 had the house painted by late fall.⁵⁸ The 'hospital house' in the Nagley Gardens, at 744 South Tacoma Street was a one and a half story building, with two bedrooms, a bath, a living room a kitchen and a "rumpus room." Local businesses had donated furniture, appliances, paint, flooring, and wallpaper so that the house was ready for the winning ticket holder. As money and donated materials ran short, several residents loaned the KHA money to continue the construction work.

In a joint meeting on August 25, Glen Felton reminded the association that Carter's employment was due to run out when the campaign ended on September 9. The Commissioners planned to hire a new director, Mrs. W. W. (Helen Bernice) Goode, and to loan her to the KHA to continue the fund-raising work. The office would be moved into cheaper quarters in the Richmond Building on the corner of Benton Street and Kennewick Avenue.⁵⁹

On September 1, the KHA and the Commissioners learned that \$17,463.17 had been pledged to the hospital's construction fund drive. Of that amount, \$7,711.94 was in cash;⁶⁰ \$1,160 was the residual from the 1943 fund drive. The fund drive had fallen far short of the \$300,000 the KHA and the Commissioners hoped to raise. Fund raising efforts were renewed in the fall with the theme "**We Create and Build Through Unity and Effort.**" By October 7, Felton was able to report that \$55,677.07 had been raised in pledges and cash for the hospital building fund.⁶¹

Goode met with the Commissioners and state officials to discuss three potential sites for the hospital. They were:

1. a part of the school district's property on the corner of South Auburn Street and Tenth Avenue;
2. a lot near the Fairway (turkey) Hatchery at 25 South Kent Street; and,
3. a lot on the hill west of the Tri-City Country Club Golf Course.⁶²

On January 10, 1950, the Commissioners hired well-known hospital consultant Dr. Herman Smith to work with the Commissioners, the architects, and Goode. Dr. Smith was one of ten hospital consultants in the nation, and he would provide the Kennewick Public Hospital District with much badly needed advice about the site, hospital building codes, medical personnel, and equipment. Smith met with Goode and the Commissioners in mid-February to review the three potential sites, and shortly afterwards, residents learned that their hospital would be built on the corner of South Auburn Street and Tenth Avenue.⁶³

In October, it was decided that raffle tickets for the house would be sold for \$1.00 each. The Thomas Hembree Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post No. 6927 and the American Legion Post No. 3 agreed to sponsor the ticket sales. The winner would have their choice of \$10,000 cash or the furnished home, worth \$20,000. Blacks were not welcome to live or shop in Kennewick at this time, and there was considerable discussion among the Board of Trustees and the Commissioners about what might happen if a Black family were to win the raffle.⁶⁴ The raffle tickets were sold throughout the Tri-Cities area, and tickets were available in many Pasco, Kennewick, and Richland businesses. It appears that Blacks were not denied the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets.

When the house was completed, the community celebrated with a parade through downtown Kennewick on December 3. The 51-piece high school marching band led a long string of representatives from the many organizations who had made the house possible, including the labor unions, veterans organizations, business people, civic organizations, the KHA Trustees, and the Commissioners. There were new cars, fire trucks, and even Santa was there. After the parade, Santa handed out 'goodies' to children, the Commissioners, Trustees, and Business and Professional Women's club members led guided tours of the 'hospital house. A number of local musicians provided the afternoon's entertainment.⁶⁵

At 7:30 PM on May 1, 1950, the winning raffle ticket was drawn from a cement mixer parked near the Benton Theater. The winning ticket was held by the Highlands Grange, who had purchased ten tickets 'to help the hospital out.' The Grange chose to use the \$10,000 cash prize to build the Highlands Grange Hall on Union Street, near the corner of 19th and Union in Kennewick.⁶⁶ The KHA then sold the house which still stands at 744 South Tacoma Street.

A brief notation in the minutes of the January 5, 1950 meeting of the KHA reveal that for several months, Goode had been talking with the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) about surplus hospital equipment that the Kennewick Public Hospital District might acquire. At this point, the \$50,000 worth of surplus property under discussion included furniture, bedding, and x-ray equipment. In the early spring, Goode, Commissioner Glen Felton, and John Vibber (representing the KHA) traveled to Seattle to meet with government officials to further investigate surplus property for the hospital. In May, Goode was notified that surplus hospital equipment had been "frozen" for the hospital, and was being held in one of the government's warehouses in Pasco.⁶⁷ Most of the equipment was still in its original packing cases, unopened and unused.

Just as the school district had used provisions of the Surplus Property Act of 1944 to acquire property from the WAA, so too the hospital district used provisions of the same act to acquire hospital

equipment. SECTION 13(B) of the Act dealt specifically with medical supplies, equipment, and property for not-for-profit health facilities.⁶⁸

In October, news articles and photographs in the TRI-CITY HERALD detailed the generosity of the \$150,000 gift of surplus property. Included in the list were 50 dozen sheets, 100 mattresses, 200 pillows and 20 dozen pillow cases, x-ray equipment, a surgical lamp and an operating table, four litters and two wheelchairs, an incubator, office equipment, 720 wash cloths, and 800 towels.⁶⁹ It was not until the mid-1960's that the Commissioners could afford to replace the last of that federal surplus property!⁷⁰

The spring of 1950 was a busy time for the Commissioners. The three men directed attorney Charles Powell to start the necessary proceedings to place the bond issue on the upcoming (November) general election ballot. The bond, for 5%, would raise \$625,000 to build the new hospital.⁷¹ In June, Goode, Vibber, Dr. Ralph DeBit and Dr. Paul Shirley traveled to Spokane to meet with E. V. Price and Dr. Herman Smith. The group reviewed the architect's plans for the last time, and sent them to state offices in Olympia and Seattle for approval. By July, the State Department of Health--Hospital Planning and Development Section was reviewing the Whitehouse and Price plans for Kennewick General Hospital. Dr. Smith submitted a bill for \$145.15 for four months worth of consulting work with the site and the plans; the Commission held the \$6,000 architectural bill from Whitehouse and Price until the state approved the hospital plans.⁷²

Throughout August, the commissioners, Goode, Dr. Smith, local doctors, and the architects met with public health officials in Seattle to review the plans, and to make the necessary state-mandated revisions. It was anticipated that final approval would come from the state's Public Health Department by the end of September.⁷³

Funds continued to trickle in. In June of 1950, the Benton-Franklin Farm Labor Association wrote to their members, asking that the treasury from the now-defunct organization be donated to the hospital fund drive. Members not wishing to transfer the money could request a *refund "in the same proportion as the amount paid in originally . . . bears to the total amount subscribed."* In August, the Association donated \$1,194.61 to the hospital fund drive.⁷⁴

The general election was held on November 7, 1950. Of the county's 6,038 registered voters, 3,591 voted in the election. The public hospital district's first bond levy, for \$550,000, passed with 2,569 'yes' votes.⁷⁵

In the same month, the Commissioners met with the Kennewick School District, School Superintendent E. S. Black, and the Federal Security Agency (FSA) to negotiate a transfer of five acres from the school district to the hospital district. The land at the corner of Tenth Avenue and South Auburn Street was still considered "*government property . . . under the supervision of the School District.*" The School District was to declare the five acres "*in excess of the needs of and by the School District*" and then request a transfer of the site to the Kennewick Public Hospital District.⁷⁶

The transfer of property from the federal government to the school district was a complicated process; the school district had 'purchased' the land from the federal government in 1948 as 'surplus property,' but under the terms of the Quit Claim Deed, the government retained actual title to the land for 20 years. On February 6, 1951, the FSA, E. S. Black, and Glen Felton signed the "**Deed of Transfer and Release**" giving the Kennewick Public Hospital District 5.0007 acres of land. Under the terms of their Deed of Transfer and Release, the hospital was expected to use the land for "*public health purposes*" for

20 years, and to submit an annual report to their activities to the FSA. The government retained title to the land for 20 years, and to "*all uranium, thorium, and all other materials determined pursuant to SECTION 5(b)(1) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1946.*"⁷⁷ Twenty years later, on February 6, 1971, Kennewick Public Hospital District held formal title to the land at 900 South Auburn Street.

The preliminary plans from Whitehouse and Price detailed the cost of the new hospital, including \$502,380 for construction, insurance, and contractor's overhead. In addition, there were architect's and engineer's fees of \$30,143.00 and sales tax of \$15,072.00⁷⁸! On February 6, the Commissioners voted to advertise for construction bids and to open the bids on March 14.⁷⁹

Throughout March, the Commissioners met with Dr. Smith, the KHA Board of Trustees, medical personnel, and the architects in a concerted effort to alter the plans so that construction costs could meet the budget. On March 22, the Commissioners awarded the contract to three firms, Allan B. and A. S. Murray Construction Company, Acme Electric Company, and James Smyth Plumbing and Heating.⁸⁰ Murray and Acme were both Kennewick firms.

On April 20, Whitehouse and Price submitted a detailed account to the commissioners:

Murray Construction	\$339,622.00
James Smyth Plumbing	196,000.00
Acme Electric	<u>34,287.00</u>
TOTAL	\$569,909.00

There was also a 6% architect's fee, for a total of \$34,194.54. In an effort to par back some of the construction costs, the architects deleted \$44,000 worth of work, including air conditioning, sprinklers for the ground, an emergency generator, and a fire alarm system.⁸¹

On March 29, the Commissioners, KHA Trustees, Goode, and local doctors gathered at 900 South Auburn Street to break ground for the new hospital. In April, the Commissioners met with Allan B. Murray to discuss minor changes to the hospital. Murray would install an electric elevator with automatic doors; the hospital's elevator would be Kennewick's first!

During this critical phase of construction, the United States was deeply involved in the Korean War. Much of the necessary construction materials, including cement, iron, and lumber, were a limited resource. Construction of the hospital was classified as an "emergency", and construction materials were granted a 'priority' rating. Congressman Hal Holmes worked closely with Murray Construction and Whitehouse and Price to speed construction materials to the site.⁸²

The Commissioners spent the summer meeting with Murray Construction Company and various hospital supply firms. In August, the Commissioners approved the 1952 budget, and reviewed two letters of application for the position of hospital administrator.⁸³ In early September, the commissioners and the hospital's executive medical staff interviewed the two candidates, Raymond T. McHugh from Berkeley, California, and John T. Taube from Tacoma, Washington. On September 7, 1951, the Commissioners hired John Taube as the new hospital administrator, at a starting salary of \$500 per month.⁸⁴

By December, the Commissioners began to look toward an opening date; Murray assured them it could not possibly come before the first of July, 1952. In the meantime, the three men authorized the new administrator to purchase the necessary equipment and supplies. The medical staff was to review all

medical and surgical supply lists; department purchases could not go over 10% of the estimated cost allowances.⁸⁵

As the new year arrived, the medical staff worked on their own Constitution and by-laws. They presented them to the commissioners in February, and on March 18, the Commissioners approved them. At the same time, Taube was directed to register Kennewick General Hospital with a number of medical associations, including the American Medical Association, the American college of Surgeons, and the Western States Hospital Association.⁸⁶

By mid-May, the Commissioners had hired John Vibber as the hospital's 'consulting pharmacist' for \$50.00 per month. The Superintendent of Nurses, Edna McColeman, was hired at \$400 per month, and the chief engineer, Karl Johnson, at \$350 per month.⁸⁷ At the same meeting, the Commissioners approved an 18-point "Personnel Policy" for the Kennewick Public Hospital District.

The Personnel Policy dealt with the work week, vacation time (two weeks for all full-time employees after one year's employment), compensation time for holidays (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day), sick leave, and insurance. The Commissioners would pay 75 cents per month per full-time employee for employee-only insurance through the Benton-Franklin County Medical Service Bureau.⁸⁸

On July 25, 1952, the TRI-CITY HERALD contained a large insert, celebrating the efforts of all who had contributed to the building and equipping of the hospital that would soon open. On July 26 and 27, residents were given the opportunity to tour the facility, to meet the 60 people who would staff the hospital, and to inspect the 'most modern and up-to-date' medical equipment in the surgery, lab, and x-ray departments.

Wrote the HERALD that day, ". . . *Kennewick General Hospital is a symbol of what a community . . . can do if it gets solidly behind a single project and, with unity and selflessness, drives on to ultimate victory. . .*"⁸⁹

Today Kennewick General Hospital is a community hospital, just as Alfred Amon and Page Carter had said it would be; it was built by the community for the community. And as Hugh Horton said when he addressed the Kick-Off Dinner three years earlier, "*Our hospital district commissioners and our hospital association have shown rare foresight in their plans for the hospital in Kennewick. They have considered both the present and the future. They have planned wisely and well. . . It is therefore up to us to go into our pockets and get the money. . .*" Kennewick residents agreed.

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