

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Newberry, Helen, Nurses Home

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MICHIGAN, Wayne

DATE RECEIVED: 4/04/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/21/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08000576

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 5.19.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Additional Documentation Approved

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept
REVIEWER Edson Beall DISCIPLINE History
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 5.19.14

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

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Significance

The Helen Newberry Nurses Home was built in 1898 to provide housing for student nurses attending the Grace Hospital Training School for Nurses at a time when the concept of trained nurses was just emerging internationally. The building meets national register criterion A for its association with an early nursing school in Detroit and as the last building left to represent the early generation of hospital and related buildings in the Medical Center area that began to develop in the later nineteenth century. The Helen Newberry Nurses Home also meets national register criterion C. Built appropriately in a domestic style to house a domestic use, the home is a fine example of the Jacobean Revival and is also notable as an early example of the work of pre-eminent Detroit architect Albert Kahn while he was part of the short-lived firm of Nettleton & Kahn.¹

The Legacy of the Newberrys

The funds to construct the building were donated by Helen H. Newberry, widow of John S. Newberry, one of Detroit's most significant businessmen and philanthropists of the later nineteenth century. Born Helen P. Handy in 1835 in Cleveland, Ohio, she moved to Detroit in 1859 when she married John S. Newberry. Together they had three children: Truman H., John S., and Helen H.² Many of the buildings erected in her name were actually donated by one of more of her children after she died. This includes the Helen H. Newberry Memorial Home and the Helen Newberry Dormitory in Ann Arbor.

Helen's obituary in 1912 indicates that the extent of her philanthropic undertakings is unknown due to a large number of anonymous gifts.³ According to a biographical sketch in the *Detroit Free Press*, Helen Newberry's main endeavor was higher education for young women.⁴ She established large scholarships for young people from the Detroit area to attend prestigious universities all over the country. She also founded and presided over the Thompson Home for Old Ladies in Detroit.

John Stoughton Newberry's professional career and commitment to public service exemplifies the dual role played by many of Detroit's early industrialists. He believed that the development of his city and his own business successes were directly linked. Born November 18, 1826, in Waterville, New York, Newberry was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1845. He worked for two years as a civil engineer on the Michigan Central Railroad. He left this position to study law and was admitted to the bar in 1853. Nine years later, in 1862, he was appointed Provost Marshal for Michigan by President Lincoln and served for two years.

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In 1862 or 1863, Newberry, with other Detroiters, established the Michigan Car Company to build railroad freight cars. Newberry recognized the opportunities presented by technological changes in transportation, expanding western territories, and manufacturing. He became president of the business within the first year and held the position until 1880.⁵

Newberry soon brought in his close friend, James McMillan, as a major investor in the firm. In 1864 Newberry and McMillan reorganized the railroad car firm in an effort to widen the business's operation. The two went on to establish a range of vertically integrated firms, including the Detroit Wheel Company, Vulcan Furnace Company, and Mackinac and Marquette Railroad. Their railway-related businesses grew rapidly, soon employing 5,000-6,000 workers. By 1890 the Michigan Car Company alone employed 2,000. In addition, Newberry held large interest in banks, other industries, and central Detroit real estate, according to his biography in the *Dictionary of American Biography*.⁶

Newberry and McMillan also collaborated on philanthropic enterprises. In 1886 James McMillan committed to sponsoring the construction of Grace Hospital, named after his late daughter, with a \$100,000 gift. Soon after, John S. Newberry offered a gift of \$50,000 as an endowment for operating costs. Additional donors to the hospital consisted largely of other prominent businessmen.⁷ The hospital was built directly across John R Street from the future site of the Newberry Nurses Home.

John S. Newberry died in 1887 before the hospital was complete. His widow, Helen H. Newberry, played an integral role in the hospital's financing and governance for the next twenty years. She served as the first president of Grace Hospital's Board of Lady Managers, established in 1888 to act with the Board of Trustees in administering the hospital. A unique body for its time, the Board of Lady Managers "audited all hospital accounts, supervised the purchase of supplies, sponsored social functions, assisted in fund raising, inspected all parts of the hospital at least once a week and reported their findings and recommendations to the Board of Trustees monthly."⁸ She was also instrumental in the development of the Grace Hospital Training School for Nurses, founded in 1889. In 1898 she donated the funds for the construction of the Helen Newberry Nurses Home.

Progressive Era Detroit and Advancements in Medical Technology

The founding and development of Grace Hospital, the Grace Hospital School for Nurses, and the Helen Newberry Nurses Home took place during the Progressive Era. The 1890-1910 time period in U. S. history is characterized by a broad new range of initiatives that addressed social problems emerging as a result of the rapid industrialization of the period.

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In 1832 and 1834 major cholera and tuberculosis epidemics broke out in the city of Detroit. With little institutional infrastructure to deal with the health crisis, Detroit's churches were transformed into wards to care for the sick. Doctors, overwhelmed by the volume of need, worked with female congregants to provide patient care. Following the epidemic, churches and religious orders pioneered efforts to establish institutions to address ongoing community health needs and provide care for the many orphans and widows left behind. As manufacturing expanded, so did the number of poor and working-class residents in the city of Detroit without healthcare. St. Mary's Hospital was established in 1845 by Four Sisters of Charity, an order founded by St. Vincent de Paul, and St. Luke's Hospital and Church Home, operated by St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church, was founded in 1861. As the demand for caregivers to operate these institutions grew, religious groups generally recruited and trained caregivers from within their own ranks. The city of Detroit felt the stresses of a growing industrial city.

Detroit's population in the second half of the nineteenth century increased more than tenfold, rising from 21,000 in 1850 to 116,000 in 1880 and 205,876 in 1890. In 1900, two years after the opening of the Helen Newberry Nurses Home, the population reached 285,704. Corresponding with this population growth, the demand for healthcare expanded dramatically, outstripping the city's existing resources.

As in other cities that were expanding rapidly at the dawn of the Progressive Era, the entrepreneurial industrialists, and especially their wives, played a leading role in establishing social welfare institutions to serve the needs of the city. McMillan and Newberry gave money for the creation of Grace Hospital under one condition, that the facility would be, "as free to the residents of Detroit in honest need of its facilities as the river that flows by the city."⁹ The majority of patients were unskilled workers. In fact, fewer than forty per cent of patients paid their full medical bill. The investment in hospitals and medical treatment made healthcare accessible to the masses. As a result the demand for educated nurses increased.

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Breakdown of Patients Served In First Year of Grace Hospital			
Total Patients	617	Occupation	
Male	275	Domestic	105
Female	342	Housewife	91
Required Surgery	307	Farmer	13
Medical Patients	310	Cook	14
Protestant	483	Clerk	14
Catholic	129	Carpenter	10
Other	5	Driver	17
Cured	537	School Boy	10
Uncured or Dead	41	School Girl	10
		Seamstress	11
		Physician	7
		Lawyer	2
		Bartender	2
		Cigar Maker	1
		Baker	1
		Broom Maker	1
		Hotel Clerk	1
		Banker	1
		Flower girl	1

10

The Helen Newberry Nurses Home, like other late nineteenth-century hospitals and related institutions, reflected the evolving demands of health care and advances in medical practice. From the beginning, these training schools served a dual purpose as educational institutions and as dependable sources of staffing for the sponsoring hospitals.

During this same period, new practices and technologies were transforming the field of medicine. Following a trend that originated in Europe and was soon replicated in East Coast cities, forward-thinking community leaders in Detroit began to organize the construction of modern new homeopathic hospitals as places to extend and improve healthcare services. As part of this movement, Grace Hospital was opened in December 1888 on the southeast corner of John R and E. Willis.¹¹

Until this time, the traditional allopathic medical practice relied heavily on bleeding and amputations. Homeopathic medicine was based on the "principle of similarities." The basic homeopathic belief is that a person should take a medicine that produces the symptoms of the ailment of which they want to be cured. "For example, a homeopath would treat a patient with a cold whose primary symptoms are lacrimation, stinging and irritation of the eyes, and thin, clear nasal discharge with a potency prepared from onion extracts because these symptoms mimic those produced by

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onions.”¹² This type of medicine had a strong appeal for a public fed up with what was increasingly viewed as the brutality of the allopathic approach. Today, both homeopathic and allopathic remedies are considered out of date, but the emergence of homeopathy at the time pushed the medical community to re-examine its practices.

In either case, the impact that quality nursing-care had on patient outcomes gained recognition. This recognition began through the pioneering efforts of Florence Nightingale, who worked to provide quality nursing care to soldiers during the 1854-56 Crimean War. Nightingale organized the first modern school of nursing, St. Thomas School of Nursing, in London, England, in 1873.¹³ Later that year, the Bellevue Hospital in New York established the first nurses' training school associated with the Nightingale tradition. By 1882 nine other nurses' training schools had been established, primarily in the East.

During this period, physicians in Michigan, particularly those trained in the East, recognized the need for trained assistants and developed courses for hospital staff concerning techniques of patient care. The medical community recognized the necessity for educated standardized care. In 1890 Michigan offered almost ten schools for nurses, but with fewer than fifty students collectively enrolled. By 1921, 1,575 women pursued nursing studies.¹⁴

Detroit's Medical District

The Helen Newberry Nurses Home was once part of a cluster of hospitals and nurses homes constructed in the late 1800s and early 1900s near the intersection of E. Willis and John R that evolved into the area now known as the Detroit Medical Center. The district centered around the Harper Hospital and Grace Hospital. In 1884 the main building of Harper Hospital was erected on John R Street, at what was the edge of the city.¹⁵ The architect was Elijah Myers. Close by Harper Hospital was Grace Hospital, designed by local talent Gordon W. Lloyd, the successful architect of such major Detroit landmarks of the later nineteenth century as the David Whitney House.¹⁶

In 1891 Mrs. Eleanor Swain contributed funds for the construction of the Swain Home on John R for students enrolled in the Farrand Training School for Nursing, now known as the Harper Hospital School for Nursing. Opened for occupancy in 1893, the Swain Home was demolished in 1958 to make room for the expanding Detroit Medical Center. Also in 1893, the Duffield Memorial Cottage for nurses working in infectious diseases was opened. The Harper Hospital School for Nursing and the Grace Hospital Nurses School stood next to each other on John R by 1889. In 1895 the Children's Free Hospital was built on the corner of Farnsworth and St. Antoine Streets. In 1913 the Richmond Terrance Nurses Home Annex became a home for nurses; it was demolished in 1962 as a result of urban renewal. In 1922 James Couzens donated the Emily A. McLaughlin Hall, which served as dormitories for training nurses. Additional nurses' homes were built as late as the 1930s, including the Helen Handy Newberry Memorial

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Nurses Home at 235 East Alexandrine, built in 1931 in honor of the late Helen Newberry. Of all this early medical building and nurses' home development of the late 1800s and early 1900s in what has become the Medical Center area, today housing the city's largest concentration of medical care institutions, only the Helen Newberry Nurses Home remains.

Grace Hospital Training School

Miss Eugenia Hibbard was the first principal of the Grace Hospital Nurses School, and the school remained operational for ninety-one years. During the nine years of her supervision, the school passed from its infancy to a well-organized training school.¹⁷ At first, only a course of two years was offered, but during her tenure the school developed a course that took thirty months. By the time it closed, the school offered post-graduate courses in surgical anesthesia, operating-room technic, X-ray technic, laboratory technic, dietetics, and physiotherapy. The curriculum followed the plan presented by the State Board. The first year students went to nearby Cass High School for the basic sciences. The instructors of nurses and the staff doctors gave instruction in the remaining courses. Seven hospitals statewide sent their students to Grace so that they could receive quality experience in the nursing field. Beginning with only fourteen students in the first class, the school eventually graduated over seven thousand nurses by its close in 1968.

Life of Nurses: Educated Women in the Workforce

The Grace Hospital Training School for Nurses was the fourth nurses' training school established in Michigan. Residents of the Helen Newberry Nurses Home were associated with the development of the principles and practices of modern nursing and nurse training. The nursing profession was almost exclusively female (the first male nurse graduation in Wayne County did not occur until the 1950s). Yet, while attempting to maintain Victorian-era concepts of femininity and women's work, for the first time young women were introduced to higher education in the sciences and to a professional life.

As difficult as it was, the work of the nurse had to be done with care and comfort, which reinforced the belief that nursing was an extension of a woman's ability to be a nurturer. Florence Nightingale said in an announcement for Harper Hospital in 1884, "A woman cannot be a good and intelligent nurse without being a good and intelligent woman."¹⁸ Nurses were to be nurturing and upstanding women in every aspect.

At the same time, nursing provided an early alternative to the traditional setting of family life, and the Helen Newberry Nurses Home represented the new lifestyle for women pursuing professional careers.¹⁹ Toward the end of the

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nineteenth century nursing had much in common with other female-dominated professions such as education, nutrition, librarianship, and social work. Though each profession had its roots in the domestic roles of women, its practitioners sought (though with mixed success) to attain professional recognition. The Florence Nightingale nurses' pledge, still used today at most graduation and certification ceremonies, depicts the contradictory roles of women advancing as nurses:

I solemnly pledge myself before God and in the presence of this assembly, to pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully. I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous, and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug. I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession, and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping, and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my calling. With loyalty will I endeavor to aid the physician in his work, and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care.²⁰

A day in the life at the Helen Newberry Nurses Home consisted of training in both femininity and medical care. All who resided at the home attended the same school and studied together in classrooms there. This live-and-learn program completely immersed the women in everything they needed to know for their future career. While most training took place elsewhere, there is some evidence that training also took place within the walls of the Helen Newberry Nurses Home as well. Historic photographs show a room in the building's basement containing what is apparently a class of about ten nurses in training, each with a desk with medical supplies, tending to two real or simulated bed patients.²¹

But the nurses' home was primarily a place for the women nurses to live together in a congenial but controlled environment. As explained by Richard R. Smith, M.D., in his book, *Medical History of Michigan, Volume II*:

The purpose of many training schools today is not only to train the young nurse in the care of the sick, but to supply a carefully controlled social background as well. The "house mother," "social directors," and superintendents of nurses are awake to the needs for recreation and social contacts. The homes of the student nurses are more than housing quarters. They are homelike, have artistic living rooms, libraries supplied with books other than texts, and music rooms furnished with pianos, phonographs and radios. The well-equipped kitchenette offers facilities for teas and suppers. Nurses are frequently given the opportunity for choral singing, public speaking, and dramatics. If the school has no gymnasium, it often rents one, and students may thus take part in basketball, folk dancing, and other indoor sports. Life in the nurses' home offers the same social advantages as that in the college dormitory. Thus the student nurse learns to balance her day with work and play.²²

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Nurses in training paid no tuition and, in addition to health care and a small stipend, were provided with room and board. Training consisted of hands-on care of patients at the hospital, supplemented in later years with increasing amounts of classroom instruction. Women were now being trusted to analyze patients and make decisions prior to a doctor's evaluation.²³ Nursing was advancing from an ethical calling for a nurturing woman to a profession whose members, at least under the best circumstances, were viewed as capable and exercising reliable judgment.

At this time institutional measures were emerging to further the professionalism of the nurse's career. The Michigan Nurses Association (MNA) was founded in 1904. Its first goal was to lobby the state of Michigan to establish a licensing system for nurses. In 1909 MNA's efforts resulted in the passage of the first Nursing Practice Act. During the years that followed, MNA worked to safeguard and promote the nursing profession and fought for the rights of nurses and their patients. Detroit's Harper Hospital was the first, in 1891, to adopt the eight-hour day for nurses, a standard gradually accepted by other hospitals throughout the country. Following this, establishment of the Michigan State Board of Registration of Nurses in 1910 resulted in a push for greater uniformity in nursing standards throughout the state. The women who stayed at the Helen Newberry Nurses Home, especially at its beginnings, were at the forefront of this emerging understanding of the educated nurse. Though it is impossible to know whether or not these young women were aware that they were at the start of a movement, it is safe to assume they felt a call to duty in a way that previous generations had not. It was the success of these women that pushed nursing into the status of a legitimate profession.

The Present

Eventually nursing schools became victims of their own success. With the establishment of nursing as a recognized field of study, by 1923 seventeen schools offered two years of university instruction along with three-year apprenticeship training. Most nursing schools today are located within universities, removing the need for the private nursing schools.

Today, the Helen Newberry Nurses Home remains the only remnant from the pioneering facilities of the medical district. The Helen Newberry Nurses Home served its original purpose until the school closed in 1968. It was last occupied in the 1980s as office space for the Detroit Medical Center. A fire in 2006 severely damaged the north end of the first floor's interior, including walls, ceiling, and stairs. The building was vacant for several years after that, but has now been rehabilitated using the federal historic preservation tax credits.

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Albert Kahn

Born in Germany and settling in Detroit with his parents in 1880, Albert Kahn (1869-1942) became a draftsman with Detroit architects Mason & Rice in the later 1880s, learning much from that firm's excellent library, and more from a year in Italy, France, Belgium, and Germany in the early 1890s sketching architecture under a scholarship – the result being, in W. Hawkins Ferry's words, "A new world of beauty opened up for him, which he recorded with fresh spontaneity combined with an accurate sense of form and proportion."²⁴ In 1896 Kahn, with George W. Nettleton and Alexander B. Trowbridge, formed their own firm, Nettleton, Kahn & Trowbridge. The Nurses Home was done in 1898, shortly after Trowbridge left, during the brief period (1897-1900) when the firm included Nettleton and Kahn (Nettleton died in 1900). Kahn then briefly practiced again with Mason, but then formed his own firm in 1902 and continued to practice until his death. Albert Kahn is best known for his steel and reinforced concrete-frame industrial architecture and engineering designed around the manufacturing process for auto manufacturers Packard, Ford, Hudson, Dodge, and Buick in Detroit and elsewhere from 1903 into the 1910s and 20s and later.²⁵ But Kahn and his firm, becoming a huge office with hundreds of employees by the 1920s, were prolific designers of every type of building and structure, including commercial and office buildings, college and university buildings, and large houses. Kahn was equally at home designing in a wide variety of historic styles as well as in more Arts-and-Crafts-inspired modes characterized by more simplified and abstract forms. The 1898 Helen Newberry Nurses Home reflects Kahn's studied use of a historic style early in his career in the wake of the thorough education using Mason & Rice's library and his year abroad as a careful student sketching historic European architecture.

¹ "Grace Hospital Nurses' Home," *Detroit Free Press*, 9/25/1898

² Ross, 872

³ Obituary, Helen Newberry. December 1912.

⁴ Shaw.

⁵ Malone. 444.

⁶ Malone. 444

⁷ Mason. 4 -7.

⁸ Mason. 11

⁹ Mason. 7

¹⁰ Mason. 8

¹¹ Mason. 4

¹² Jonas. 393

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13 Deans. 1066 - 1067

14 Smith. 6

15 Ross. 495

16 Mason. 7

17 Smith. 14 - 15

18 Deans. 1066 - 1067

19 Schmeling. 32

20 Smith. 6

21 Harper - Grace Hospitals, Inc. Archives

22 Smith. 6 - 7

23 Deans. 1066 - 1067

²⁴ Ferry. 8-9.

²⁵ Ferry. 9-13

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08003576

Architect/Builder Nettleton and Kahn ; _____ ; _____
Albert Kahn ; _____ ; _____
_____ ; _____ ; _____

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

- Previous documentation on file (NPS) None
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	330390	4690730	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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