

RAMONA HOSPITAL



Dr. Henry William Mills, founder of Ramona Hospital in 1908.

RAMONA HOSPITAL was San Bernardino's only first-class surgical hospital from its opening in 1908 until St. Bernardine Hospital opened in 1931. In 1936 Ramona was incorporated as the San Bernardino Community Hospital, while remaining in its original location on the northeast corner of 4th and Arrowhead. On April 22, 1958, the old hospital's doors were closed for the last time and its patients moved to a brand new facility at 1500 W. 17th Street; where it remains today.

Ramona's founder was Dr. Henry William Mills who was born in Herford, England on December 5, 1872, the son of William Hathorn and Eliza Husting Mills, his father being a native of Orton, Waterville and his mother of Cambridge-shire.

Dr. Mills attained his medical education at Edinborough University and at St. Thomas Hospital, London, England. After graduation and hospital experience he practiced in Gloucestershire, England, until February, 1903, when he came to San Bernardino.

In 1905 Dr. Mills established the Marlboro Hospital of San Bernardino, and in 1908 opened the Ramona Hospital, where he also conducted a training school for nurses. He was commissioned a captain in the Medical Corps in March, 1918

and was stationed in Base Hospital No. 35 at Savenay, France shortly after July 1st. After the armistice was signed he was transferred to England, being stationed at Liverpool, until April 8th when he returned to the United States on the Saxonia as consulting surgeon, and took up practice again in San Bernardino. He had one brother killed during the war on the vessel Artist. It was torpedoed and sunk off the south coast of Ireland and every officer on her and all but six of the men were drowned.

Earl E. Buis, longtime columnist for the San Bernardino Sun, wrote a lengthy column for his paper on April 15, 1958 about Dr. Mills and the Ramona Hospital and it is worth repeating here:

When they carry out the last patient and turn off the lights at the Community Hospital [old Ramona Hospital] on April 22 I wonder where they'll find a key to lock the front doors.

It's just possible there's a key still hanging on a nail in the office, but I doubt it. For not since a young English surgeon, the late Dr. H. W. Mills, lugged in the tools of his trade in the early 1900's and they wheeled in his first case has the hospital been closed -- even for an hour.

And time was when there was scarcely a family in the town that had not known the joy occasioned by the coming of the newborn, the anxiety of hours in the halls outside the rooms of their stricken or even the anguish at the passing of their loved ones in this hospital.

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