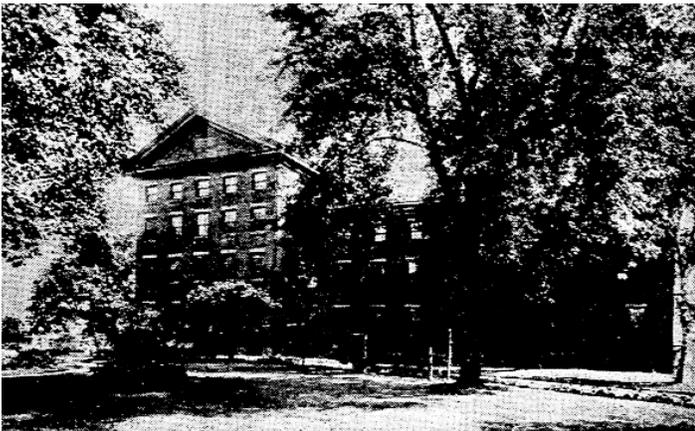


# THE ALMHOUSE AND THE MUNICIPAL COLONY

## The Almshouse

The Trenton Almshouse assured that the poor, elderly or disabled, those unable to shift for themselves, had the basic needs. Built in 1871 on the former Bower Farm on Princeton Avenue, it featured attractive architecture, without considering the comfort and care of its residents. Over seventy people were crowded into tiny rooms barely larger than a prison cell while the superintendent was housed in spacious quarters. By 1913 there were 76 men and 17 women housed there.



*The Almshouse (Trenton Sunday Times-Advertiser, 10/15/1993)*



*Enlarged Almshouse Ward (Trenton Evening Times, 2/11/1913)*

Commonly known as the Poorhouse, it was originally a dumping places for elderly, incompetent, abandoned and every kind of disadvantaged persons unable to care for

themselves. Usually there was no attempt to separate them as to age, race, sex or ailment. However, the Trenton Almshouse did not care for children or insane people but it did separate men and women.



*C.M. Worth, Almshouse Superintendent (Trenton Evening Times, 2/11/1913)*

Residents (or inmates as they were called) could discharge themselves at will and would often be used as “temporary housing” for winter shelter for tramps and other homeless that sometimes were a problem. Inmates were required to do most of the work, taking care of their rooms, washing their clothes; with some men cooking and serving meals. Several inmates that were helpless were cared for, bathed and dressed by other inmates.

Although Mayor Frederick W. Donnelly was an advocate for building new junior high schools in Trenton, he wanted the School Board to buy the Almshouse property on Princeton Avenue for the building of the first junior high school, Junior No. 1. Donnelly wanted to use the money from selling the land to build a new Almshouse.

In 1914 the School Board purchases the Almshouse property for \$21,000. Educators are still not convinced that the Almshouse property is the best site for the junior high school. However, due the high cost of land in the eastern section of the city and the fact that the School Board already purchased the Almshouse property, the School Board proceeds six months later with the building of the junior high school on the Almshouse property.

## The Municipal Colony

In 1911, the board of commissioners of the city of Trenton, ratified the general plan for the creation of the Colony as formulated by Mayor Donnelly. A group of hospitals and homes were established at Hamilton Avenue and Klockner Road and the Colony became recognized for its attainments as a medical, humanitarian, sociological and civic achievement.



In 1915 the Municipal Colony opens on 25 acres in Hamilton Township with the Tuberculosis Hospital, Home for the Aged and Infirm (formerly known as the Almshouse), Nurses Home and the Children's Hospital (still under construction.) All the buildings were of recent construction, except for the Tuberculosis Hospital, which was erected in its original form several years before, but was never used for that purpose before.

The Tuberculosis Hospital was enlarged and improved to accommodate 80 patients.

The Home for the Aged and Infirm could accommodate 20 women and 60 men, with hospital accommodations for 40 women and 90 men. There were four wards, each ward having its own bath and toilet accommodations, sitting room and outside porch. Accommodation was also provided for the superintendent.

The Children's Hospital would accommodate 100 patients, in addition there were quarters for the nurses and private rooms for paying patients. It was used in 1916 for infantile paralysis patients.

The Home for the Nurses would accommodate eight nurses.

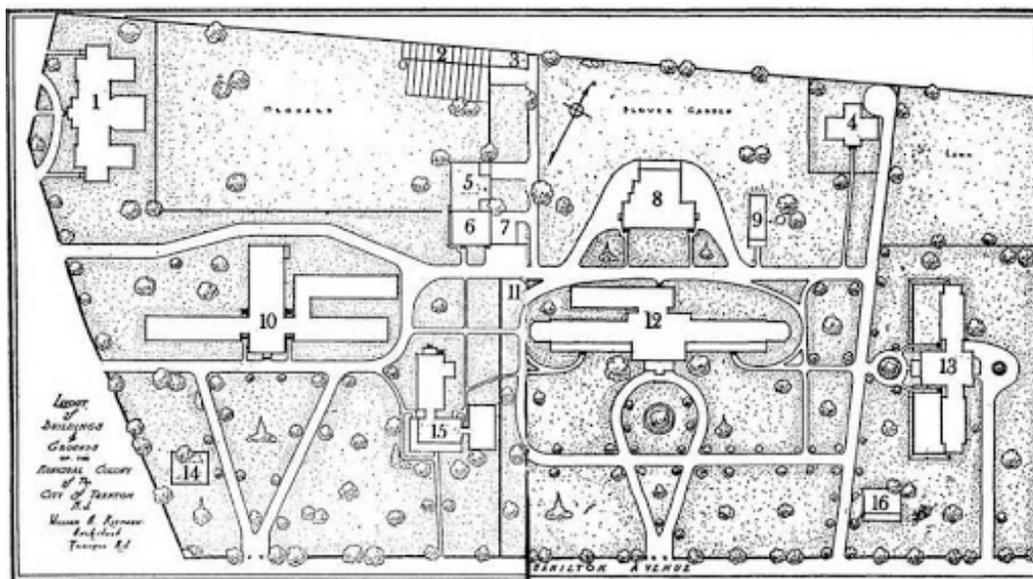
The Isolation Hospital was reserved for smallpox and chronic diseases.

Other buildings included: a garage for two automobiles, two horses, six cows and necessary feed space; and a chicken house. On the grounds was the Municipal Cemetery, consisting of twelve acres. A modest but lasting headstone was erected over every body interred in the burying ground.

In 1938 Trenton's city council renames the Municipal Colony to "The Frederick W. Donnelly Memorial Hospital," in memory of Mayor Donnelly who died in 1935.

In 1965 Trenton could no longer afford to commit the capital funds needed if the hospital was to keep pace with the necessary medical and hospital advances. The city accepted a county offer to take over the Donnelly Memorial Hospital for \$778,000.

In 1985 Mercer County demolishes the hospital to make way for a new senior citizen's center. Some buildings still remain.



LAYOUT OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OF THE MUNICIPAL COLONY OF THE CITY OF TRENTON

Key to buildings shown above: 1 - Hospital for Venereal Diseases; 2 - Poultry House; 3 - Garages; 4 - Isolation Building; 5 - Storehouse; 6 - Administration Building; 7 - Garages; 8 - Boiler House and Laundry; 9 - Occupational Building; 10 - Home for Aged and Infirm; 11 - Pump House; 12 - Tuberculosis Hospital; 13 - Hospital for Contagious Diseases; 14 - Medical Superintendent's Cottage; 15 - Nurses' Home; 16 - Non-Professional Building.

*Illustration of the Municipal Colony located at Hamilton Avenue & Klockner Road from A History of Trenton 1679-1929*