

Ascension Episcopal Church And The Big 4 Brotherhood Building



Ascension Episcopal Church
Hinton
July 2004
Vicky Madley

The following pages have photos and newspaper clippings of the Ascension Episcopal Church being destroyed by a cyclone, then rebuilt. Then moved from 3rd Avenue to 5th Avenue to allow the construction of the Big 4 Brotherhood Building.

The Big 4 Brotherhood Building was later purchased by 4 local surgeons to house the Hinton Hospital.

Many thanks to Lisa Ellison Bragg who provided all of the newspaper clippings!

Ascension Episcopal Church Built – 1881

Corner of Third Avenue and Temple Street

Historic Reflection Excerpt - Hinton Daily News – November 29, 1952

.. By REV. J. W. WARE JR. ..
Rector Ascension Church
The story of the Episcopal church in Hinton is an interesting one, and as old as Hinton.

On Saturday evening, June 6, 1874, the first service of the Protestant Episcopal church was held in Hinton by the Rev. Charles M. Callaway. The next day, Sunday, June 7, services were held in the morning and evening. Following the even-



ing service all who were interested in organizing a church were asked to remain. About 25 remained and it was ascertained that there were about 13 communicants in Hinton. At that time it was determined to organize a parish and build a small church.

On July 31, 1874, Bishop Whittle of Virginia made the first official visit of a Bishop for Confirmation. At that time he confirmed Mary Ann Atkinson, Margaret

Rose Atkinson, Miss Alice Dunn and Mary Chilton Fontaine.

Through the earnest and energetic efforts of Major B. S. Thompson, Captain C. S. Thompson, and the Hon. W. W. Adams and others, work was pushed forward and in the spring of 1881 a neat brick church capable of seating 200 persons was completed and furnished. This church was located on the corner of Temple Street and Third Avenue, the present location of the Big Four Drug Store. Many of the early leaders of Hinton worshipped in this Episcopal church.

Ascension Episcopal Church – July 23, 1897

Corner of Third Avenue and Temple Street

Destroyed by Cyclone -Newspaper accounts on following page.

(Photo courtesy of the West Virginia and Regional History Center)



Ascension Episcopal Church Destroyed by Cyclone – July 23, 1897

Wheeling Daily Intelligencer –
July 24, 1897

DISASTROUS STORM

Strikes Hinton, Leveling a Score of Buildings, Including the Episcopal Church—Crops are Ruined.

Special Dispatch to the Intelligencer.

HINTON, W. Va., July 23.—This city was visited this evening by one of the worst thunder and rain storms ever known in this part of the state. Buildings by the score were blown to the ground, including the Episcopal church, one of the finest buildings in the city, which is a total wreck. The damage to crops is great. The corn crop is practically ruined. The loss to property in this city is estimated at from \$50,000 to \$75,000.

Historic Reflection Excerpt
Hinton Daily News –
November 29, 1952

DESTROYED BY STORM

This church building was destroyed by a severe storm (a tornado) on July 23, 1897. The roof was torn off the church, the sides damaged beyond repair, and practically all the furnishings destroyed. Only the organ (now owned by Miss Alleen Burke), the Holy Bible, and one Alms Bason were saved. The alms plate still is used to receive the offerings at the services held in the Ascension Church.

Following the storm, reconstruction work was started immediately on a new church building and in about eight months a new church occupied the site of the destroyed one. The new building was of wood with a large parish room added to the church along with a vestry room on the back. This new church was used for the first time on Easter Sunday, April 10, 1898. The church building is the present one in use today.

New Wood Frame Ascension Episcopal Church – 1898

View - upper Third Avenue looking towards Temple Street, Rose's Pharmacy on left, New Church on right. Before Summers National Bank was built.

(Photo courtesy of West Virginia and Regional History Center)



West Virginia & Regional History Center

Ascension Episcopal Church – 1903

Six years after it was destroyed by a cyclone and rebuilt at the original location.

Corner of Third Avenue and Temple Street

(Photo courtesy of West Virginia and Regional History Center)



BIG FOUR BUYS BUILDING SITE

From the Hinton Daily News April 2, 1907

Railroad Men Acquire Episcopal Church Property—Will Erect Handsome Lodge Edifice

All doubt was removed this morning for the construction of a handsome edifice to be built by the Big Four Brotherhood's Improvement Company, when a transaction was closed transferring the Episcopal Church property on the corner of Third Avenue and Temple street to the organization. The consideration was \$13,000, and the work of erecting one of the most modern and beautiful buildings in the city, and will be actively pushed as soon as the plans and specifications can be approved and the building contract awarded. The plans will specify that the building shall face third avenue.

It has not been definitely decided, but it is the belief that the

building will be three or four stories. The first floor will likely be devoted to business houses, the second floor to offices and the third or fourth to the joint lodge rooms of the Order of Railway Conductors, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, and the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, who have among themselves promoted the success of the enterprise.

The site is one of the most desirable in Hinton, and will form a fitting location upon which to erect a structure of the railroad men, which will be in architecture, construction and appointment be a worthy tribute to the men who have built up and sustain the business interest of the city.

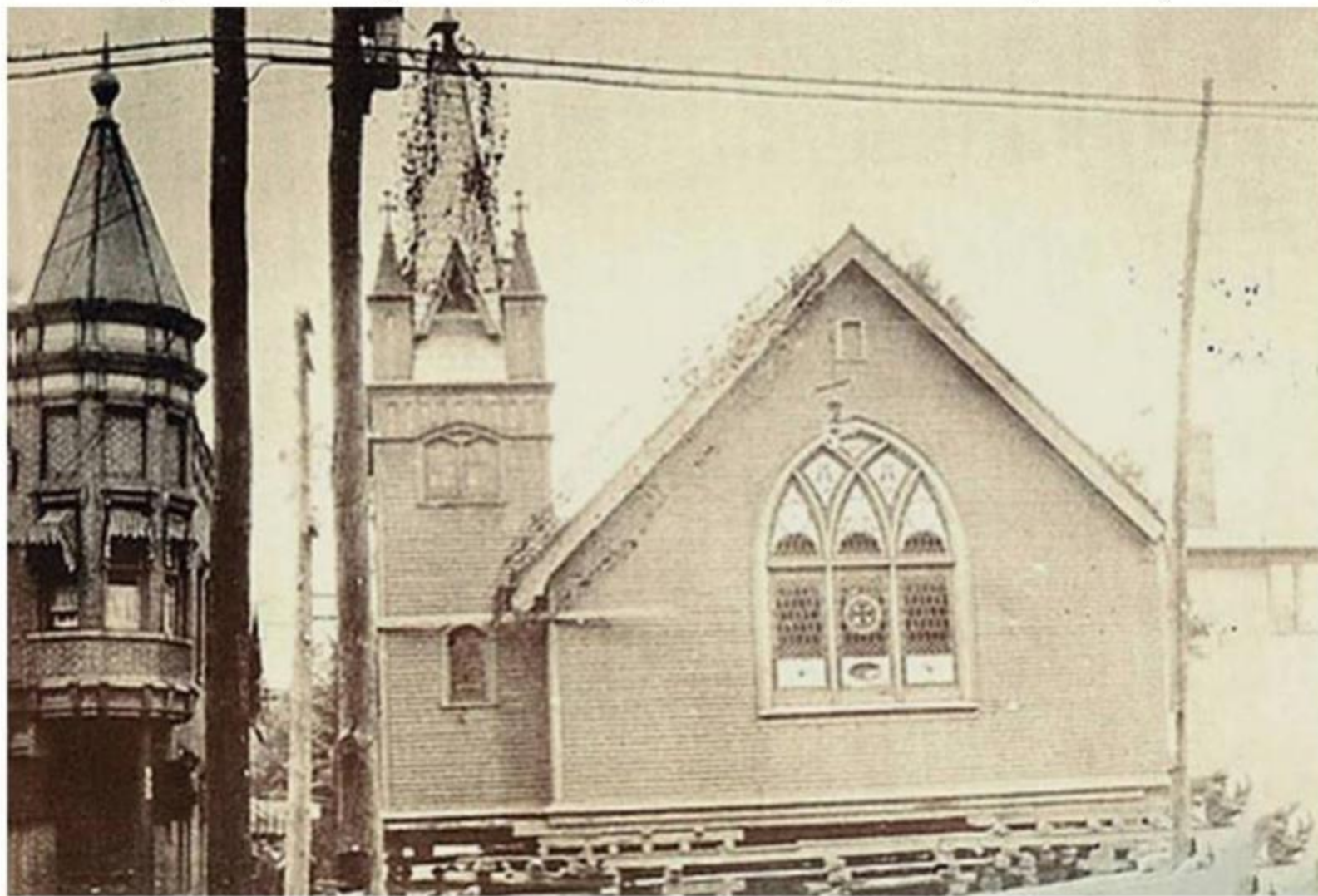
A meeting of the organization will be held in the office of attorney R. H. Graham, who negotiated the deal for the property, Saturday

evening, when a committee will be named to ask for specifications and bids. In view of the decisive and determined manner in which the enterprise has been pushed to the present status there is no reason to believe that there will be any lack of energy in soon witnessing the fruition of the efforts of these organizations.

The Company is capitalized at \$40,000, and a large part of the stock has been subscribed. The purchasing committee comprised: George W. Wiseman, S. B. Hamer, J. H. Romick, Benjamin F. Smith and W. B. Madison.

Ascension Episcopal Church – 1907

**Being moved from 3rd Avenue to 5th Avenue to allow construction
of the Big 4 Brotherhood Building
(Photo courtesy of the West Virginia and Regional History Center)**



Ascension Episcopal Church Moved – Summer of 1907

Hinton Daily News –
June 26, 1907

Big Four Building

It is of interest to the readers of Hinton and vicinity to know that work will soon be commenced on the large Big Four building to be erected on the present site of the Episcopal church.

The church will be moved out Temple street to the house at the corner of Temple and Fifth avenue recently vacated by Mr. and Mrs. Balch; which house is now being moved to the lower side of the lot to make room for the church.

The work is being carried on by Messrs. Moore and Bryant, of Huntington and it is safe to say the church will be moved to Temple street next week which will allow work of excavating for the Big Four Building to be begun then.

Historic Reflection Excerpt
Hinton Daily News –
November 29, 1952

A rectory, or minister's residence was bought in 1890 but as it proved too small it was later sold and a new rectory built in 1892. This rectory was located where the Hinton Hospital is on Third Avenue. Erected at a cost of \$2,000, this home was later moved to 209 Fifth Avenue and is now occupied by Mrs. Lula Gorman and family.

During the summer and fall of 1907, one of the most amazing moving undertakings was accomplished when the church, while intact, was moved two blocks to its present location at the corner of Temple Street and Fifth Avenue. When one considers that Temple Street at the time was dirt and mud and that trucks and modern machinery for moving were not available, the greatness of the moving project is evident. In order to put the church building on the corner, it was necessary to move for a distance a house on Fifth Avenue. That house is now the rectory where the present pastor, the Rev. J. W. Ware, Jr., resides.

Big 4 Brotherhood Building – 1907 Postcard
Originally housing the 4 Railroad Unions
Corner of 3rd Avenue and Temple Street



Big 4 Brotherhood Improvement Co. - 1907

To build Building for Unions

From The Independent-Herald - April 29, 1907

BIG FOUR CO. ADOPTS PLANS

For Their new Building—Will be
Four or Five Stories High and
a Handsome Structure

Architect J. B. Stewart of Huntington, was in the city Saturday night and submitted plans for the new Brotherhood Building, which were adopted by the directors and Mr. Stewart was awarded the contract as architect. The plans submitted, while not complete, show a handsome building and one when completed that will be a standing ornament to the Railroad men of this city. It will be 50 x 140 feet and four or five stories high. The first story will

be of stone and the remaining stories of pressed brick. The first floor will contain four store rooms 22 x 50 feet with a large corner room and large entrance to the building from Third avenue, about the center, to reach the upper floors by elevator and by stairways as well. The second and third floors will be made for apartments and well arranged for comfort and convenience for families. The fourth floor will be made into two large halls, one to be used by the owners and one lodge room for rent to other orders.

The building will be as convenient and up-to-date, as it is possible to construct.

Mr. Stewart will have the full plans ready in sixty days or perhaps less time and by that time active work will be commenced. We believe the directors have acted wisely in securing the services of Mr. Stewart as their ar-

chitect. He is thoroughly competent and we have no doubt that he will give them a fair deal all round.

The present church has been sold to the Episcopal people and will be moved to the Balch lot, as soon as the foundation can be made ready. The rectory is advertised for sale and with these two buildings off the lot active work will be begun.

The cost of the lot and building will reach almost \$60,000.

Big 4 Brotherhood Building

Completed in September 1908, the building is located at the corner of Third Avenue and Temple Street. It was originally built as the Union Hall for the following “Big 4” Railroad Unions:

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) – est. 1863

Order of Railway Conductors (ORC) – est. 1868

Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Engineers (BLFE) – est. 1873

Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen (BRT) – est. 1883

In 1929 the “Big 4 Brotherhood” building was purchased by 4 surgeons and it became the Hinton Hospital. It operated as such until 1977.

Currently the building is occupied by its oldest tenant the Big 4 Drug Store, a barber shop, restaurant and other businesses.

“Big 4 Brotherhood” building Cornerstone Ceremony Invitation – 1907

From The Independent-Herald – December 19, 1907

A CARD

To the officers and members of the various Fraternal and Beneficiary orders and other organizations of the city of Hinton:

You are hereby especially invited and requested to take part in the parade at the laying of the corner-stone of the Big Four Brotherhoods building on the 11th day of January 1908.

It is earnestly hoped that you will comply with this request, and inform either of the undersigned of your intention so to do, in order that places may be assigned you in the parade

Very respectfully,

S. B. HAMER,

Chairman, Gen. Com.

J. H. ROMACK,

Chief Marshall parade.

The Independent-Herald
January 16, 1908

CORNER STONE LAYING OF
THE BIG FOUR BUILDING
PROVES A GENUINE SUCCESS

The occasion of the corner stone laying here today has been an important one, many prominent visiting railroad men being present. The famous Alpine band, of Clifton Forge, furnished the music. Engineer John H. Romack was chief marshal of parade, the members of which assembled at Masonic and Elk Hall. The line of march as per program was Third to Second avenue on Temple street, up Second avenue to Ballengee st. to Fourth ave., down Fourth ave to Temple street, out Temple st. to Sixth ave., back Temple st. to Fifth ave.; down Fifth ave. to Summers st. out Summers st. to Third ave., up Third ave. to Big Four Building

The parade was led by the Knights of Templar regaled in their handsome uniforms.

The railroad orders which took part were—the O. R. C., B. of L. E., B. of L. F., and B. R. T. W. C. Pollock was marshal of the conductors; Edward Blacker of the engineers; E. L. Bobbitt, of the firemen and E. T. Miles, of the brakemen.

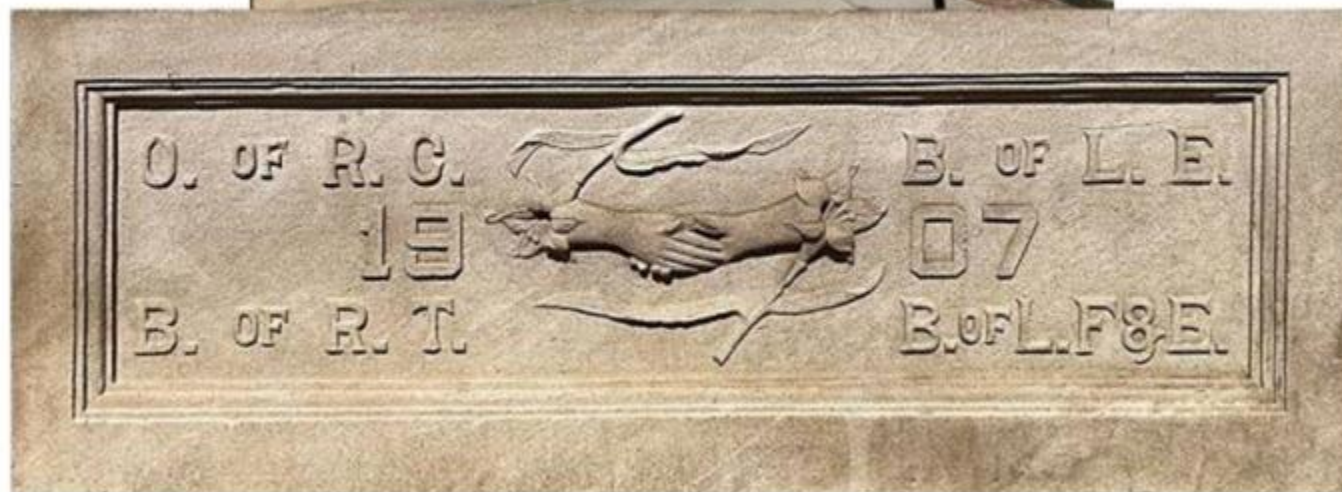
Deputy Grand Master Brown, of the Masonic lodge, officiated at the imposing ceremonies incident to the corner stone laying.

After the corner stone laying the large gathering of people assembled at the skating rink where splendid addresses were made by V. Fitzpatrick, vice grand master of the B. R. T., and Hons. C. W. Osenton, J. L. Bumgardner and A. R. Heflin. Letters of regret from Senator Scott and President Stevens of the C. & O., were read expressing their regret in not being able to be present.

A grand ball will conclude the days entertainment at the rink tonight.

The Big Four Brotherhoods building which is now being constructed at the corner of Third avenue and Temple streets will be, when completed, a credit to the city and a monument to the business enterprise of the four large and prominent railroad orders for which it was named—the O. R. C., B. of L. E., B. of L. F., and B. R. T.

**Entrance to the “Big 4 Brotherhood” building – 2022
and Cornerstone with the Four Railroad Unions that funded it.
Construction was complete and doors opened September 1, 1908**



Big 4 Brotherhood Building Sold - 1918

Excerpts from the Hinton Daily News - August 3, 1918

BIG FOUR BUILDING SOLD FOR \$39,000

The Big Four Brotherhood Building was sold at auction this afternoon for \$39,000

It was bid in by engineer W M Daughtery who represented himself and other creditors and endorsers.

This about covers the indebtedness

Saturday, August 3rd 1918

at 2 o'clock p. m., at the front door of the Court House of Summers county, West Virginia, proceed to sell by way of public auction to the highest responsible bidder the following described real estate mentioned in said Trust Deeds, situate in the City of Hinton, Summers county, West Va., to-wit:

All of that certain lot, piece or parcel of ground located on the corner of Temple street and Third avenue in said city and extending back with Third avenue 140 ft to an alley, and having a frontage of 50 ft on Temple street, being known and designated on the official map and plan of the said City of Hinton as Lot No. 1 in block "R" and being the same lot which was conveyed to the Big Four Brotherhoods Improvement Company by the Trustees of the Ascension Episcopal church by deed dated May 6, 1907, and of record in said Clerk's Office in Deed book 29, page 468, together with all the buildings and structures placed thereon, and in addition thereto all fixtures, appliances, appurtenances and betterments of every kind and character that have been placed on the said property by the said owners.

TERMS OF SALE

One-half cash, the remainder on a credit of 6, 12 and 18 months, the purchaser to execute notes with approved personal security, interest bearing from date for the deferred payments; title retained until all of the purchase money shall have been paid.

NOTE: The above described property is the most valuable business site in the city of Hinton, and there is built on said lot a four-story brick business house, covering the entire lot in which there are four commodious and elegant business rooms—the second and third stories being devoted to apartments and offices, and the fourth story being especially provided and adapted for Lodge Rooms and public assemblies. The building is wired for electric lighting, provided with an elevator and heated by steam, and has all the modern conveniences. Title perfect.

L. P. GRAHAM, as Trustee.
6-30-6w T. N. READ, as Trustee.

Hinton to Have Fine Modern, Fireproof Hospital

Hinton Daily News - May 23, 1929

Big Four Building Has Been Purchased By Local Surgeons

**Cost of Converting Structure Into Clinic Is
Over \$200,000; Remodeling Work to
Start July 1st; Will Have
Roof Garden.**

Hinton to Have Fine Modern, Fireproof Hospital - Continued

One of the most momentous and interesting business deals in the current history of the city was consummated today by the purchase of the Big Four Building for conversion into a hospital. The name of the new institution, it was learned, will be The Hinton Clinic and all stock in the company will be owned by local surgeons and physicians. The prime movers of this great improvement, are Doctors Van Sant and Broadus, and associated with them is Dr. Pence and a number of other leaders of their profession.

Hinton has long bore the enviable reputation of having surgeons and physicians of superior abilities in her hospital, and, due to the talents of these doctors, the business has simply outgrown the building facilities of the city. Consequently it became necessary either to erect a hospital building at once or locate a building suitable to the needs of a growing and up-to-date hospital. Plans were secured and studied months ago and when the specifications of a model 75 bed hospital were analyzed and checked against the construction details of the Big Four Building it was discovered that an especially erected structure could no better fulfill the requirements than the Big Four. As a result negotiations have been on foot for some time to co-ordinate the ideals and hopes of the leading doctors of the city to give Hinton a modern, fire-

proof, hospital and, with the merging of these foresighted men's abilities a few days ago, also came the realization of this dream in the form of the Hinton Clinic

Will Cost \$200,000.00

Detail cost estimates are being prepared covering the conversion of the Brotherhood Building into the new Clinic, and the estimates runs slightly over \$200,000.00 to date. Complete partitional alterations will be made in the building and the new Clinic will bear little semblance of the old structure inside. The building will be divided into three separate and distinct sections by fire walls of solid masonry. One section will enclose the public passage area, including the elevator shaft and the main hall and stairway, which will be flanked on either side by the wards and patients rooms. Thus, three separate and wholly distinct buildings will result and the Clinic will be triply immune from fire hazards, as any possible conflagration would be confined to only one section of the building, leaving two other sections safe for occupancy or easy evacuation

Will Install Sprinkler System

The organizers of the new Clinic emphasize that they will not be satisfied with anything less than the most modern methods of rendering their institution absolutely safe, and that the plans call for the installation of an automatic sprinkler sys-

tem in addition to the divisional fire walls. By this method each room of the Clinic will have a fire extinguishing water supply piped directly to a spray head in the ceiling, equipped with a fusible valve which opens automatically as soon as a fire starts and extinguishes the flame before it has the least opportunity to do appreciable damage. This automatic springling system, in combination with the dividing fire walls will render the new Clinic one of the most completely fire proof buildings in this section of the state, and one of which the entire city can be justly proud.

Modern Accommodations

The plans of the promoters call for the installation of an electric elevator equipped with all known practical safety devices, costing approximately \$5,000.00 and the elevator contractors have their representative in the city today measuring for the changes necessary. This elevator will travel at a speed of 150 feet per minute and will serve all floors from the basement to the roof garden. On the ground floor will be the main entrance, fronting on Third Avenue, the reception lobby and the main office. Very pleasing decorations will be carried out in this section, including inlaid tile floors, comfortable furniture, elevator grillage and appropriate wall treatments. On the second floor will be located the offices of the staff surgeons and phys-

Hinton to Have Fine Modern, Fireproof Hospital - Continued

cians, replete with examining rooms, treatment facilities and laboratory equipment, also a number of private rooms for patients. The private patients rooms will be equipped with Simmons all-steel furniture and special hospital beds, decorated with a variety of tones and colors to match the different colors of the various rooms. The remainder of the private rooms and the patients ward rooms will occupy the third floor entirely, which will easily accommodate 75 beds, without the slightest tendency to make the hospital seem crowded. Polish battleship linoleum will be laid over practically all the

floors of the Clinic for cleanliness and sound-proofing and every effort will be made to furnish and decorate the patients quarters to avoid the customary hospital appearances. On the fourth floor will be located the major and minor operating rooms, anathesia rooms, delivery room and sterilizing apparatus. In one wing of this floor will be the staff dining room and kitchen and in the other will be the nurses home. Each floor will have its own diet kitchen, complete with electric stoves and electric refrigeration.

A Roof Garden

On the roof above the fourth floor a solarium will be built for the use of convalescing patients. Access to this roof garden will be had by use

of the electric passenger elevator, and it is anticipated that this feature of the Clinic will be the most popular and appreciated phase of convalescence. Roof gardens, or solariums, are the very latest developments of modern hospital construction and the equipment of the new Clinic with this feature will place Hinton near the head of the list for modern medical institutions in this section of the country.

Work To Begin July 1st

Specifications are nearing completion and the owners will be closing contracts immediately for work of placing the building in the process of alteration and it is thought that actual work will begin about July first on the fourth floor and every effort will be made to push the work to rapid completion. Those who are interested in this new institution and all those who have examined the plans are elated over the fact that our city is to have a large, modern and fireproof hospital in the very near future, and the organizers of this splendid project deserve the hearty support and gratitude of the entire community for bringing to our midst such a fine institution as the Hinton Clinic will be.

Hinton Hospital Ready in November

Hinton Daily News - September 14, 1929

NEW HOSPITAL WILL BE READY IN NOVEMBER

**New Roof Garden Is One of
Many Attractive Features;
Elevator Equipment Has
Arrived**

INSTALL NEXT WEEK

According to the present rate of progress being made by the Hinton Construction Company, contractors on the Big Four Building which is being remodeled into one of the finest and most modern hospitals in the state, the building should be ready for occupancy by November 1, but it will probably be somewhat later than this before the hospital is ready for the receiving of patients.

The roof garden for the new hospital is practically completed, and will no doubt prove a most popular feature for convalescent patients. The view from the roof is magnificent, and patients will be made most comfortable. It will be 20 feet wide and 70 feet long with about one third of it roofed permanently while awning will be used to cover the remainder. Benches and chairs will be placed about the roof for patients, and about 20 flower boxes with growing plants and the railing and evergreens about will add much to the attractiveness of the place.

The elevator pent house has also been completed and the machinery arrived today. Installation of the elevator will start next week.

Other work about the building has also reached the stage where it can be completed rapidly and without delay.

The new Summers County Hospital opened on Greenbrier Drive in 1969.

Hinton Hospital remained in operation until August 1977 when it closed its doors for good.