

Long Beach Sanitarium (1907–1923)

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An Adventist affiliated health institution managed under “private supervision” located in Long Beach, California.

History

The Long Beach Public Health Board in the 1890s sought to establish a health facility in Long Beach rather than have Long Beach residents have to travel to the Los Angeles County Hospital for medical treatment.¹ In 1896, articles of incorporation were filed for a “medical and surgical sanitarium [and] a school of hygiene for nurses.”² This facility was initially located at 325 W. Second Street and managed by M. A. Shutz, M.D. In 1903, the Long Beach Hospital Association was created to start a hospital. Architects Starbuck and Curth designed the new hospital, but it closed in 1905 due to “mismanagement and scandals.”³

The [Battle Creek Sanitarium](#) Company leased the defunct hospital on December 2, 1907. William Ray Simpson (1862-1940), formerly manager of the Glendale Sanitarium, became the business manager and his wife, [Dr. Abigail “Abbie” Winegar-Simpson](#) (1865-1949)⁴ and Dr. Preston Stanley Kellogg (1858-1930), from the Battle Creek Sanitarium, served as physicians.⁵ They had been involved in founding the Glendale Sanitarium in 1904. By 1908, Winegar-Simpson was considered the lead physician of the institution.⁶

The Simpsons added \$8,000 worth of improvements and were given the option to purchase the facility within the subsequent three years for \$65,000. It was advertised as “one of the most modern and well equipped” health facilities west of Battle Creek with fifty rooms, “elegantly furnished” on a “magnificent beach.”⁷ Within the first year, the facility was expanded to seventy rooms and a hundred patients were treated.⁸ Adventist periodicals noted that Dr. Winegar-Simpson had now taken up “private work” at the Long Beach Sanitarium.⁹ The institution was affiliated with the network of Adventist sanitariums but not owned by the Adventist denomination itself. Demonstrating the close affiliation between the denomination and the sanitarium, Adventist denominational workers and members traveled from throughout the United States to be treated at the institution and to work at it. The sanitarium reported in the *Review and Herald* information on the number of patients treated and its number of beds.¹⁰ Dr. Winegar-Simpson received a missionary license from the [Southern California Conference](#) and participated actively in health ministry in addition to operating the

sanitarium.¹¹

During the 1918-1919 Influenza pandemic the staff transformed one of the surgery wards of forty rooms into a special ward for treating the influenza patients. According to the Simpson's daughter, the hospital did not lose any patients.¹²

Legacy After Adventist Affiliation

When oil was discovered in 1921, the city revenue rapidly increased. Using these funds, city officials hoped to open a community hospital that offered services at a lower rate than that offered by the then current private hospital, Long Beach Sanitarium.¹³ Whether this move by the city or the need to update facilities contributed to the sale of Long Beach Sanitarium in 1921 is unclear, but it seems likely both contributed. Up to the announcement of the sale, Long Beach Sanitarium was actively serving the community and had recently had a number of high-profile visitors, including [John H. Kellogg](#) and the brother of President Harding.¹⁴ The sanitarium's founder, Dr. Winegar-Simpson, although heavily invested in Long Beach, was busy with medical outreach beyond it as well. In the 1920s, she was listed a faculty member of Loma Linda College and after the closure of Long Beach Sanitarium, she worked at Glendale Sanitarium.¹⁵

The sanitarium was purchased by Dr. Stern and Dr. Boyd with plans to update the facility.¹⁶ In August 1923, the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word (based in Houston, Texas), who had been seeking to build a hospital in the area, purchased the building that had formerly contained the Long Beach Sanitarium (by then known as Long Beach Hospital) and renamed it St. Mary Long Beach Hospital.¹⁷

The original building was destroyed in the 1933 Long Beach earthquake and was replaced by a new hospital facility in 1937. Since then, St Mary Hospital has greatly expanded and was renamed St. Mary Medical Center in 1975.¹⁸ Affiliated with the University of Los Angeles (UCLA), the medical center continues to operate as a significant medical facility for the community.

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NOTES

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2. "New Companies," *Los Angeles Herald*, July 9, 1896, 8.
3. Schipske, "Historical Look at LB Hospitals."
4. Obit. *Pacific Union Recorder*, January 31, 1949, 12; "Abbie Simpson, Pioneer Doctor, Taken by Death," *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 1949, 50; <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/64939201/martha-abigail-simpson>., accessed 2/12/24.
5. "Long Beach Sanitarium Company Takes Hospital," *Los Angeles Herald*, December 3, 1907, 7.
6. "Letter from Elder Stone—No. 3," *Indiana Reporter*, April 15, 1908, 1.
7. See advertisement in *The Los Angeles Times*, December 23, 1907, 3.
8. See description under "Section 3—Sanitariums," *ARH*, September 17, 1908, 21.
9. See under "Changes in the Working Forces of the California Sanitariums," *Life and Health*, April 1908, 191.

10. See, for example, Obituary for Mary Christenson, *Central Union Outlook*, July 18, 1911, 3; N.P. Neilsen, "Items of Interest," *Pacific Union Recorder*, April 8, 1915, 4; Hannah Larsen, "Nebraska Sanitarium Notes," *Central Union Outlook*, July 30, 1912, 3; "News and Notes," *The Educational Messenger*, February 7, 1908, 4. For an example of the information submitted by Long Beach Sanitarium to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, see "Section 3—Sanitariums," *ARH*, August 15, 1912, 19.
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12. [Mary] S[tewart], "Reaction," *Independent*, May 28, 1976, 3.
13. Schipske, "Historical Look at LB Hospitals."
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18. "95 Years of Healing and Hope." For a postcard image of the sanitarium and its original location before the earthquake, see "Long Beach Sanitarium," *HistoryPin.org*, <https://www.historypin.org/en/explore/geo/37.77493,-122.419416,12/bounds/37.677987,-122.496664,37.871746,-122.342168/paging/1/pin/271579>, accessed 2/12/24.

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