

# Alamosa Community Hospital



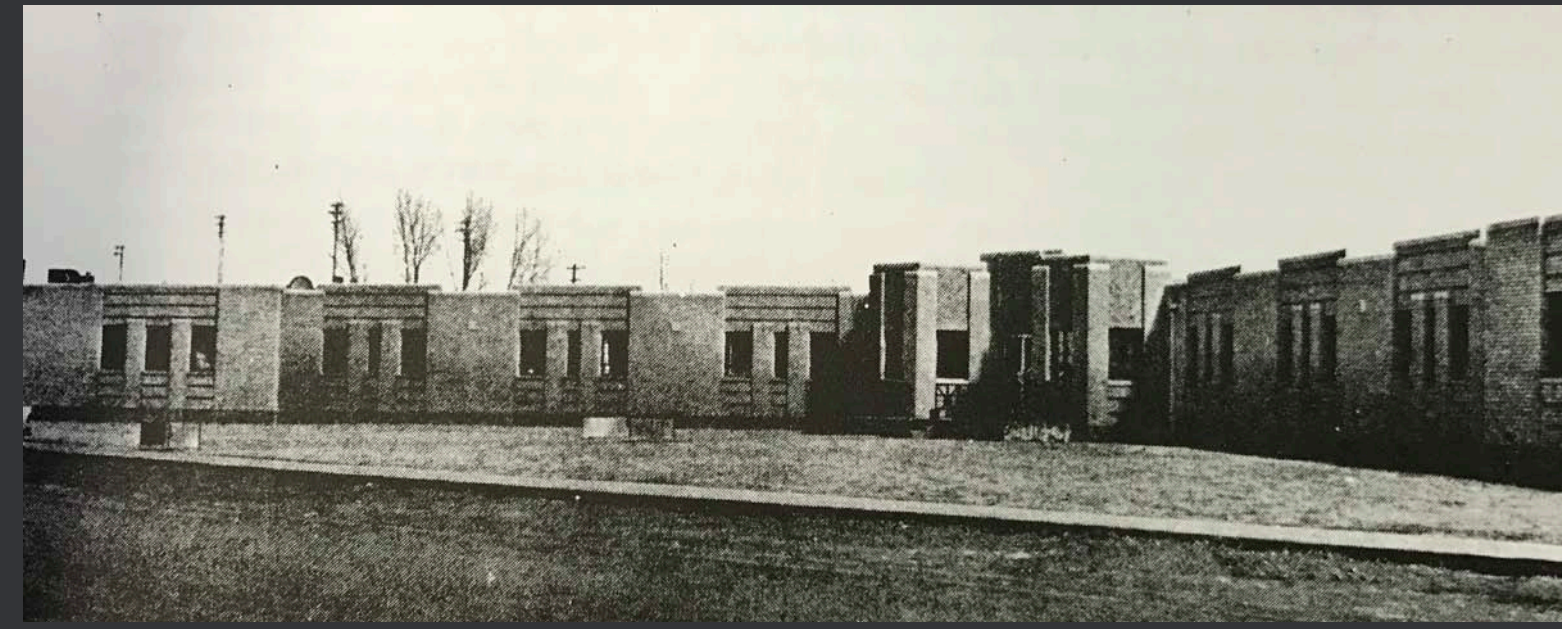
"Efficient medical service has resulted in part from a rather unique ownership operation agreement worked out in 1937. The Alamosa Community Hospital Association represents the community and owns the hospital. The Lutheran Hospital Association of the San Luis Valley leases the hospital and has sole responsibility for operating it."

## 1938: Alamosa Community Hospital built in the shape of the letter Y

Entering from Crestone Avenue, Alamosans were gratified that finally the hospital was being removed from the downtown area and was being placed in a much larger, modern, fireproof structure in relatively quiet surroundings near the western edge of town.



Front entrance of hospital, 1938-1958



West side of hospital, 1938-1958

## 1945: War creates staff shortage

During WW II in the 1940's, the hospital was frequently overtaxed. "The hospital scarcely could have remained open without the well-trained nurses' aides who volunteered so many hours of service without compensation. The Lutheran Ladies Aid played a vital role in keeping the hospital supplied during a time of scarcity. The ladies served meals, raising money to buy dishes, silverware, pants, etc. for the kitchen where Mrs. Rose Gumper was cook. Mrs. Katie Graf was the chief seamstress, but all the Lutheran ladies volunteered countless hours in making towels, bandages, gowns, and bibs, and in repairing sheets." (1-2)

## 1946: Elton A. Reese of Monte Vista begins 35 years as hospital administrator

Mr. Reese understood the growing health care concerns for the SLV and had a vision and worked tirelessly to find the funds for capital improvements. Reese received his B.S. degree from Concordia College in Seward, NE and taught school in Monte Vista before entering the U.S. Army. He began with the Alamosa Community Hospital in 1946 as the "Business Manager in charge of hospital administration." His title changed to Superintendent, Administrator and finally served as the Executive Director of the board until his retirement. He also served as the president of the Colorado Hospital Association.

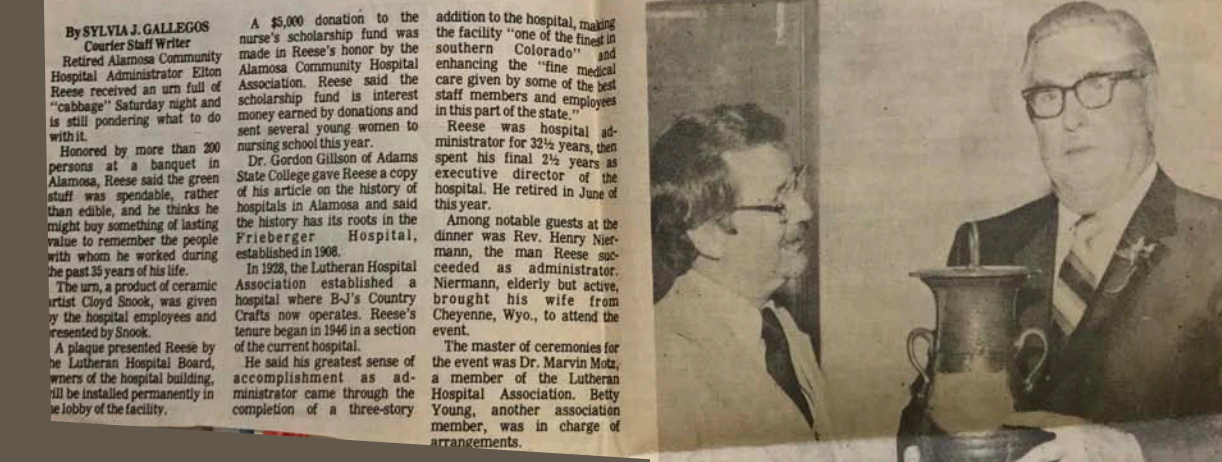


Elton Reese at his desk, 1957

## 1949: Dental staff organized at hospital

## 1950: Dr. David Labouisse becomes hospital's first resident radiologist

## Over 200 Honor Retired Hospital Administrator Reese



1981 newspaper clipping of retired Alamosa Community Hospital Administrator Elton Reese receiving a ceramic urn and being honored for his accomplishments. Reese was hospital administrator for 32 1/2 years, then spent his final 2 1/2 years as executive director of the hospital.

## Medical staff seeks addition to Alamosa Community Hospital

At its meeting last night the Medical Staff of the Alamosa Community Hospital voted to recommend the building of an obstetrical wing to accommodate 25 patients and nursery with 25 bassinets. Reviewing the medical aspect for March, the staff members... It was pointed out that 447 patients were hospitalized in March, including 63 obstetrical patients. The average daily census in March was 47. The hospital at present has 47 beds. "Some days," hospital officials said, "patients, including expecting mothers, were cared for in beds behind a portable screen."

In 1960, Margaret Jones (Lloyd), R.N., reflected about working on-call. She recalls, "There were only three of us nurses on call. Myself, Mary Sloan and Mary Ann Lee. And two of us needed to be ready. One time Dr. Johnson needed us for an 'emergency' vasectomy, which made us mad because it was only for the convenience of the patient. We were paid \$5/month extra to take the call. If we came in for a major surgery, we earned \$5 for major surgery and \$3 for minor." Jones worked in surgery, in OB and in the emergency room.

## 1953: Completion of New "OB Wing"

With the completion of the new "OB wing" twelve mothers and babies could be accommodated in excellent surroundings and for the first time the hospital had a separate labor room.

## 1953: Addition to Hospital includes ER, X-Ray and Laboratory

Built by local contractor George Vanlwaarden, the latest addition was completed and "now Alamosa community Hospital could offer for the first time an adequate emergency room, laboratory, and an x-ray section." (1)



New Nursery, Obstetrics Department, 1953

## 1957: Hospital Volunteers through Girl Scouts



The "WHO" girls (WHO-We Help Others), 1957. Hospital Volunteers through Girl Scouts

## 1959: Chaplaincy Program instituted

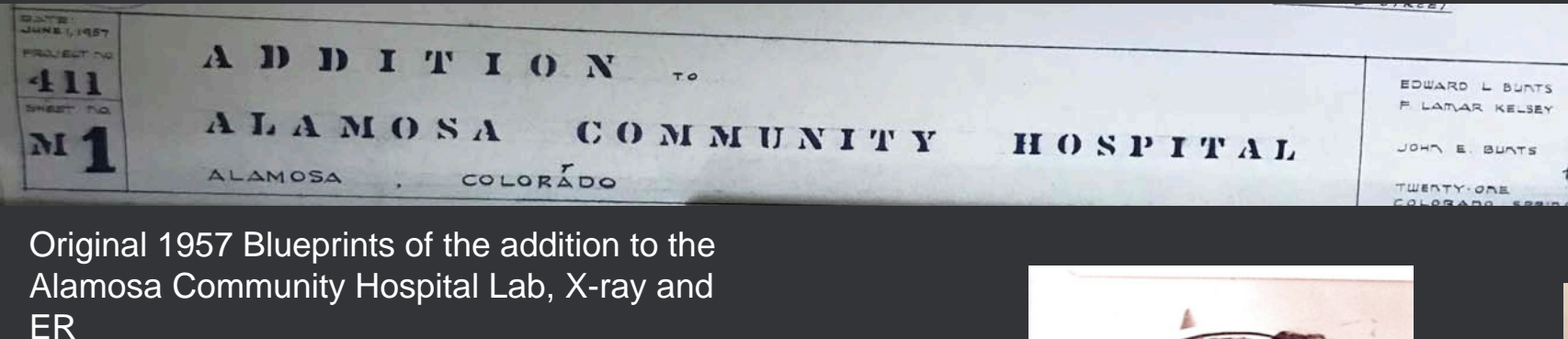
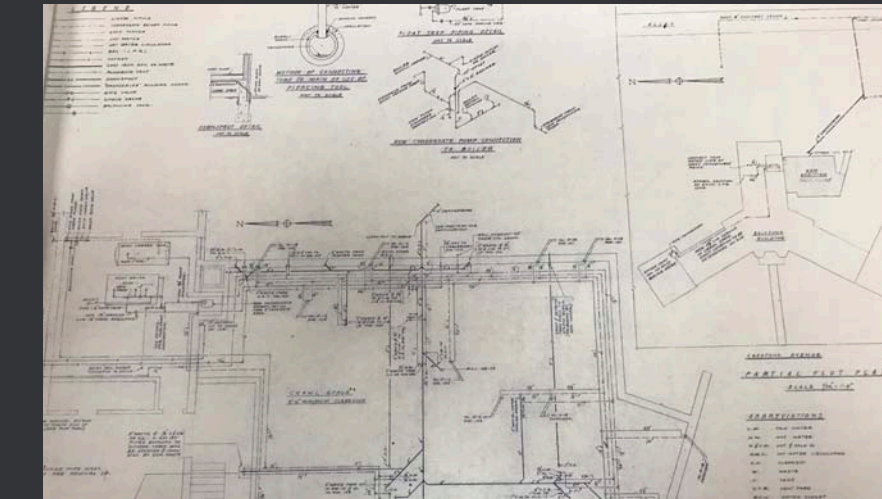
A chaplaincy program was instituted, with Reverend Norman Heimsoth, Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, as the hospital's first chaplain. It was dropped in 1975 and re-instituted in 1981 and has been voluntarily staffed by community ministers since then. 1959: Trinity Lutheran Church donated their altar in 1960 when the church moved and has been in the hospital chapel since then.

## 1959: Reese stressed need for additions to hospital

Due to overcrowding conditions and nursing services that were unsatisfactory, additions and upgrades were made resulting in a "modern 26-patient nursing wing" new electrical and boiler was added as well as remodeling of the surgical area. "For the comfort of patients and hospital personnel, all rooms (both old and new) were equipped with individual thermostats. The striking 26-bed wing contained six private rooms, three 5-bed wards, and one 5-bed pediatric ward. Alamosa Community Hospital now had 72 beds." (1)



Aerial shot of Y-shaped hospital, behind Adams State University, Richardson Hall, 1950's



Original 1957 Blueprints of the addition to the Alamosa Community Hospital Lab, X-ray and ER

"I arrived in the 1960's and barely unpacked by the time Mr. Elton Reese was knocking on my door. Many college professors and coaches had spouses who were nurses. I wanted to work part-time and he only wanted FT nurses, so at one point we all quit to make our point and then got hired back part-time. If I wasn't busy in the OB, then I had to go to the floor. Dr. Johnson would show up in his galoshes straight from the cow pen to deliver the babies and we had to mop the floors when he left. He always ordered honey water for the babies because he felt honey was the best for building immunities. But Luella Lowe put a stop to that." Mabel M. Cotten, RN

## 1961: The Gray Ladies

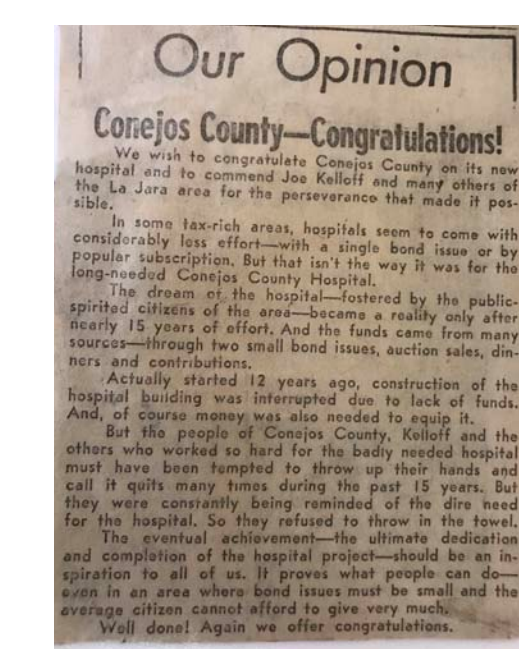
American Red Cross Volunteers, officially formed to provide friendly, personal, non-medical services to the hospital.



L to R, Back Row: Lola Jones, Nancy Baker, Margaret Menke, Ann Edstrom L to R, Front Row: Unknown, Unknown, Bernice Nixon, Ruth Brown

## 1963: Conejos County Hospital Established

The start of the Conejos County Hospital began with nearly 15 years of effort. The hospital committee was formed back in 1948 and worked tirelessly with citizens, businesses and professional people of Conejos County, using their own funds to establish contacts and resources for the project. The hospital project was fostered by the public and spirited by citizens of the area. The people of Conejos County worked so hard for the badly needed hospital. In spring of 1951, with \$60,000 in the bank the board of directors decided construction should begin. The site consisted of six acres of land donated by the Valdez Brothers of La Jara. The eventual completion and achievement of the hospital project was declared in April 21, 1963.



CONJOS HOSPITAL — Groundbreaking for the new addition to the Conejos County Hospital was held at 11 a.m. yesterday. The new addition, made possible by the \$100,000 bond issue approved last spring will provide 15 additional beds, a new obstetric department, additional office space and a lobby. Present for the ceremony were members of the hospital board, staff doctors, nurses and other hospital workers. President of the board, Joe Kelliff gave the address. The prayer was offered by Wayne Miller, hospital administrator. Men shown above, left to right are Dr. Dale Thomas, Otha Baggett, A. Mandel, Ben Kuchel, Alamosa, contractor for the addition, Kelliff, Dr. V. Johnson and Miller. Completion is expected to be May 15. (Watersburg Photo)

