

Notes from Discussion with Tony Calo on 12/22/2012 at Tony's house, 99 Green Street, Medfield. John Harney, Ros Smythe and Gil Rodgers in attendance. Follow-up discussion with Tony Calo on 12/26/2012 with Gil Rodgers.

Tony started in 1957 as Steward, and worked at Medfield State Hospital (MSH) for 25 years moving up to position of superintendent in charge of all aspects of the Hospital: full-time staff of 630, 1500 - 2000 patients, budget, all hiring and firing, facilities and grounds, power plant, and water and sewage system. He retired in 1982 and served 18 years as Dover's Building Inspector. MSH began in 1892, opened in 1896, and finally closed in 2003 after 107 years of operation.

Relationship Between MSH and Town of Medfield

Good communication and interaction with Medfield. Offered jobs and voluntary opportunities to many residents of the Town and surrounding communities. Tony had monthly meetings with Medfield, Sherborn, and Dover town's people. Anybody could come but it was usually selectmen. Exchanged ideas and recommendations. Fire, police, emergency services were provided by Medfield and these were very well received. Lots of volunteers from Medfield and other towns would come to MSH (e.g., Ann Thompson, Rennie Roberts.) People would come to watch movies sharing the audience with the patients, and play baseball games against MSH staff (who had a good team.)

Relationship Between MSH and Norfolk Hunt Club (NHC)

NHC would frequently ask permission to ride on MSH grounds. NHC would contact MSH so that gates could be opened where cows were pastured behind the "R" building. Great riding trails were used frequently connecting all the way back to the Saltonstall Farm on Smith Street.

Tony later opined that Leverett Saltonstall was a good neighbor as well as a contact person for the NHC. Tony also said that the "powers that be" made explicitly clear to him that the land was to be made available to the NHC.

NHC would use grounds a "couple of times a month on average," including for foxhunts and hound schooling and exercising.

No special liability waiver or formal forms were required. A representative from NHC (e.g., Richard Saltonstall) would just call when there would be a hunt, and then use the property.

To Tony's recollection there were never any incidents or problems with equestrian use over the 107 years of use.

Other connections with NHC mentioned by Tony were Nathaniel Clark who was a trustee of MSH and Master of NHC, and Rennie Clark (Roberts) who was also a NHC Master as well as a highly respected trustee of MSH. (Dr. George Oliver Clark – Rennie's great uncle was the first surgeon at the Hospital.)

Description of Agricultural Uses of MSH Grounds

Farming produced more than enough food for MSF, and excess milk, produce, and eggs were sent to Cushing State Hospital and Boston State Hospital. All cows (about 100) were milking cows (not beef cattle) and the hospital maintained 500 chickens.

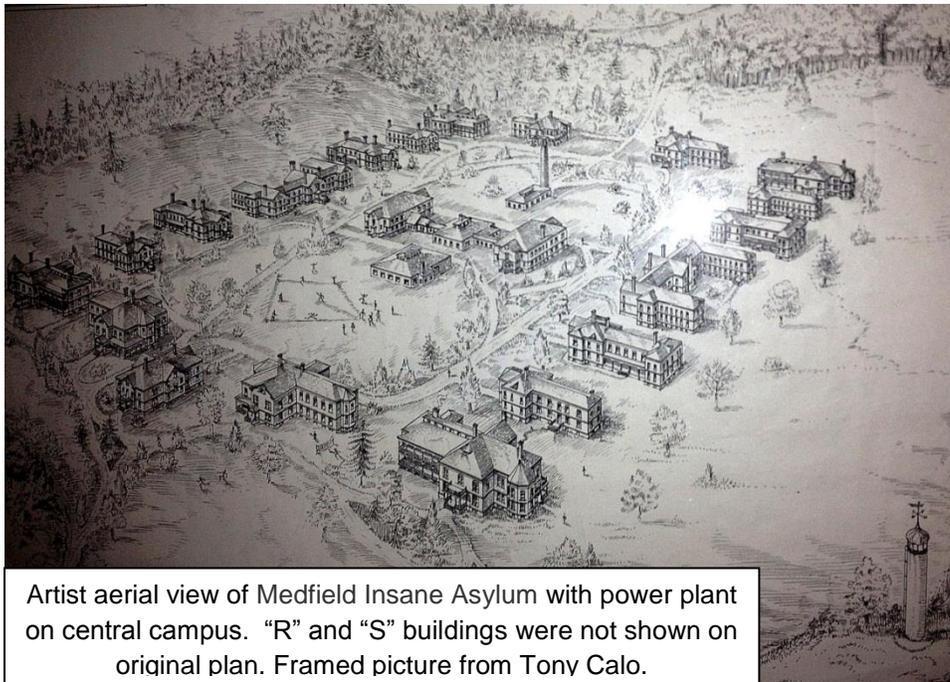
Patients were active on the farm. Many enjoyed working in the fields and with animals, and getting out of the buildings. This was changed because complaints to the State said that patients were being used as slave labor; MSH responded by paying them at a rate of \$.10/ hour and keeping the program going as long as they could. The work was important for recreational and occupational therapy. Over 100 people were working when patient population was 1400 – roughly 10%. Tony commented on how the patients truly enjoyed their jobs.

Structured program of approximately 10-12 individuals was developed to take selective patients to work in the laundry, farm, kitchen, dining room, maintenance, and even as engineers. Discharged patients would sometimes go to Boston State, Fernald State School, Cushing Hospital, and other institutions for work.

MSH infrastructure

Electrical System

The original power plant was on the campus where the canteen building is now located. (See aerial view of the proposed hospital showing power plant smoke stack in middle of campus.) This was coal-fired. Coal was shipped by rail on the railroad spur along Charles River, and then probably trucked up to plant. Tony didn't know what happen to the coal ash.



Artist aerial view of Medfield Insane Asylum with power plant on central campus. "R" and "S" buildings were not shown on original plan. Framed picture from Tony Calo.

Sometime later (probably around WW I) MSH built a new power plant near the Charles River (what we now call the "Power Plant site" although this was not the original site. This was co-



generation producing both steam and electric power for the facility. Initially it burned soft coal. When facing the River from the Hospital, coal was stored just to the left and above the power plant. The soft coal was difficult to handle -- the pile would sometimes freeze in the winter and had to be broken up with pick-axes, or the coal elevator would freeze up causing the fire to go out and the boilers to shut down. Tony started Memorial Day 1957. The plant was converted from coal to oil a year later because of such problems.

Heavy oil (#6 oil) was shipped in by large 3000 gallon heated tank trucks. Oil was stored in three large underground heated tanks with combined capacity of 90,000 gallons. In one instance -- when unloading oil -- unbeknownst to a sleeping truck driver, the hose somehow came out of the tank, and oil seeped all the way down the slope to the Charles River. Clean Harbors was hired to clean up this major oil spill which was extremely difficult to handle because of its molasses-like consistency. Government certificate had to be obtained before the cordoned area could be reopened. This was the only major oil spill that Tony could recall.

At least one tank has leaked so oil residues have seeped underneath the storage area.

Electrical tie-in to Edison Electric didn't occur until the 1990s. Before then MSH was entirely energy self-sufficient. There were back-up generators in the power plant.

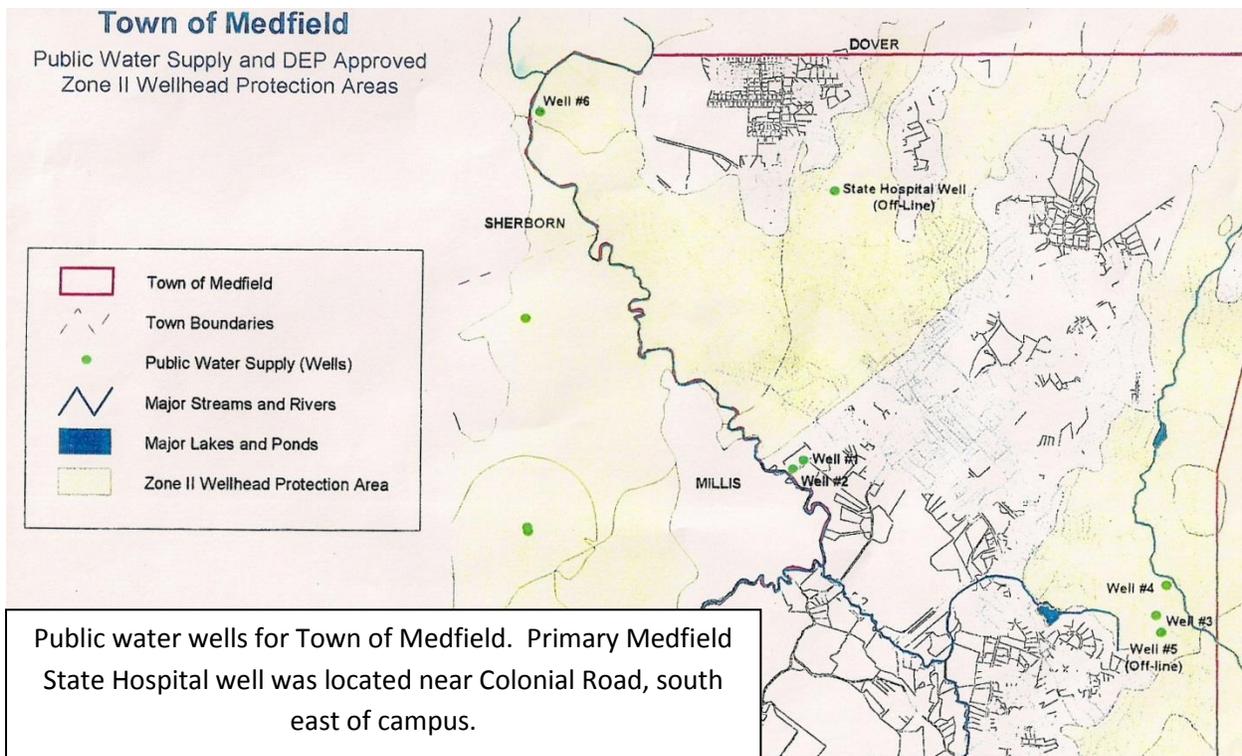
Steam Pipes

Steam pipes are all covered by asbestos insulation and thread throughout the entire campus and in the basements of all buildings. Pipes are located only 3-4 feet below surface, housed in race-ways made of wood fame originating at the power plant and going to all buildings and houses. Some ventilation shafts are still present. Electrical cables are also all underground in buried conduits, and have hazardous insulation and switch gear that probably contain mercury. Steam pipeline would break repetitively in front of "S" Building and had to be dug up. Tony didn't know the cause of such breaks.

Water System

MSH had its own wells and pumping stations. The main source was a well-site composed of multiple (38) artesian wells located east of Colonial Road in a swampy area beside the old railroad tracks. (This is not used anymore, but Tony says this is an excellent water source and is now being considered by the Town for redrilling and future use.) Water was pumped from this location to a two-way metering station located along Harding Street where water was directed to the MSH water tower or into Medfield's water distribution system. Other wells are located along the Charles River drawing water from the large underground aquifer that lies underneath the Hospital grounds. Underground electric wires provided power for the pumping stations.

Wells on MSH property were used for years but the water was hard and required lots of chemicals to soften. As back-up, the Hospital had a 99-year lease on water from Farm Pond in Sherborn dating back to when the hospital opened in 1896. This was used only occasionally but was very soft water and good for laundry and boilers in the Power Plant. Underground pipe runs from Farm Pond directly to the Power Plant and into the hospital's water distribution system. This lease has now been terminated but the pipe connections may still exist.



As noted above, the water tower is connected to the Medfield water system. At one time MSH supplied all the water for the Town, but this later became a matter of providing storage for increasing water pressure. Town of Medfield used to pump all of its water into the MSH water tower in order to get enough pressure, particularly for residents in Mt. Nebo area with high elevation. While it is still physically connected, it has been turned off recently because of coliform found in the tank. Tony also mentioned that the tank had to be scraped and painted on the outside and the inside every 5 years. (Need to apply a rubberized paint on the inside.) Tower may now be leaking.

Sewage System

MSH had its own sewage treatment facility where human and commercial wastes poured down toilets and drains would flow by gravity down to the facility and into large leaching-beds located across Rt. 27 in the gravel pits (where the police shooting range is now.) The gravel pits have good percolation characteristics and have never seemed to cause an issue, although they are not that far from the Charles River.

Waste sites on property

There were two main dump sites: (1) the site by the Charles River (called the C&D area,) and, (2) where the playing fields are now located. This land-fill was closed in the 70s, and has since been cleaned-up and covered under supervision of the Corps of Engineers. The dump site by the Charles River (C&D), according to Tony was really terrible -- rubbish, wastes, construction materials, lead pipes, coal ash, medical wastes, oil, and asbestos, -- pretty much everything -- were thrown in. Coal ash containing heavy metals was deposited from the power plant over many years until open dump sites were finally forbidden. These were the only two dump sites that Tony knew of on the property.

The original laundry was modified into a maintenance garage. Laundry had dry cleaning operations, so another question is what happened to the dry cleaning fluids such as PCE? There is an un-resolved plume flowing from around where the garage was down towards the River.

Some other notes

- In 1957, 1497 patients were housed when Tony first started working at MSH. In addition there were about 600 staff. At that time only adult patients were admitted -- 18 years and above – no children. Maximum reached over 2000 patients in mid-1970s. This facility was characterized as a geriatric psychiatric hospital; the patient population, for example, in the “S” Building averaged 85 years old.*
- “R” building (which was the high security facility with tall fences surrounding the building) was not on the original plan, but was built later around WW I (1918-19.) Also, the “S” Building is not shown on the original plan that Tony possesses (see above photo.)*
- The Odyssey House (down the hill across from the Hospital campus) was originally built for the farmer and his crew. It was later used by the Department of Mental Retardation which was entirely separate from the Department of Mental Health. (These are still two separate departments in Massachusetts.) The large, well-attended house on Hospital Road is still actively used by the Department of Mental Retardation, is fully staffed, and under the direction of Wrentham State School.*
- During his tenure, Tony also housed some 25 low security prisoners at the MSH who helped out as workers on the property doing construction and maintenance.*
- Tony doesn’t think any of the original buildings can be demolished because these are all under the National Historic Register. He felt that it would be will extremely difficult to do so and require Federal (not just State) level approval.*
- The original records and engineering drawings were all shipped to Westborough State Mental Hospital, and have now been transferred to DCAMM for storage.*
- There has never been a book written on the history of MSH. Tony thought of doing this at one point, but never got around to it and many of the knowledgeable people are now in their 80s and 90s or are, unfortunately, dead.*