

The purpose of this report is not so much to document the building itself, which has already been done when the building was declared a historical building. But to document and honor the people who worked and committed their lives to helping the people of El Paso and surrounding areas. In doing so, they have become an important part of El Paso history. With this and the other reports on the Homan and Crimen families, I hope that others are inspired to continue the work they began in the building of El Paso History and the medical field here.

### Early History

The early 1900s health care history of El Paso, was mainly concerned with the treatment and curing of tuberculosis. With the Southwestern US being thought of the perfect place to recover from it. It was found that dry air, lots of sunshine and rest was the best for recovering from TB. El Paso was also thought to have the best climate for recovery, so ended up with many sanatoriums or Sans as they were called, founded for the care of TB. A large majority of the Doctors and medical personal who worked with the TB patients had come here because they had TB themselves and stayed to help others "Sans" or Clinics were built for them to recover. This is especially true of the beginnings of Southwestern General Hospital.

### The original or "old" building

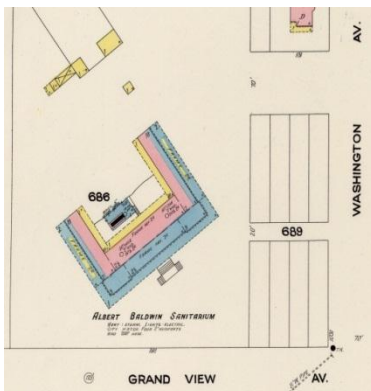


Picture Postcard Ca.1907 - The Albert Baldwin Sanatorium  
Harvey, and Dr. J.W. Laws.

The Albert Baldwin Sanatorium was founded by David Gilmore Baldwin ( Nov. 28, 1868 - May 17, 1912 ). He was a former New Orleans postmaster who had contracted TB. Coming to El Paso looking for a "sun cure", He stayed and bought the site in 1903 and built a tuberculosis sanitarium. It was named "The Albert Baldwin Health Resort" in honor of his father. He contracted Dr. Charles M. Hendricks to served as it's first medical director and patients were admitted beginning in 1907.

In 1909 Dr. Hendricks resigned his position to go into private practice and start the first TB clinic in El Paso. In 1914 founded the Hendricks – Laws Sanatorium, when he partnered with Dr. R. D.

### Map from 1908 Sanborn Fire maps

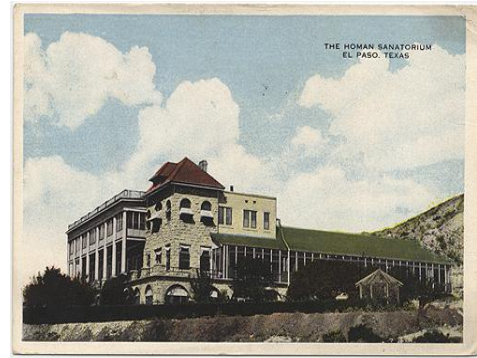


Caption -  
Albert Baldwin Sanatorium  
Located in the great health belt  
of the arid region 10,000 Ft. of  
Stone living and sleeping  
porches



Photo from El Paso Library

In 1910 after several refusals, David Baldwin Leased the Sanatorium to Dr. R.B. Homan Sr. and Morton McKinney. Shortly after Dr. John C. Crimen, DDS, came to El Paso for his health as he had contracted TB. They met at the Sanatorium, became friends and while at the Sanatorium , Dr. Crimen met his wife also.



Ca1915 Postcards – 2 views of the Homan Sanatoruim with the sun porch

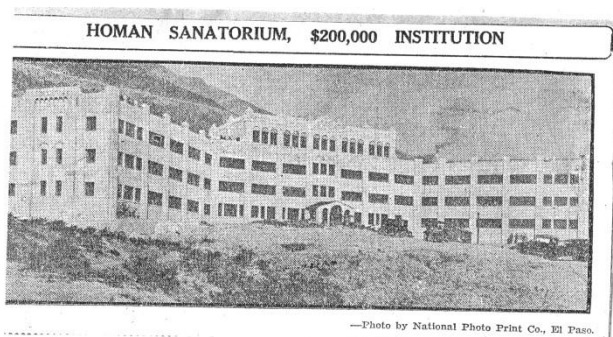
In a 1916 magazine ad the rates for Care at the Homan Sanatorium were: “For all classes of (TB) cases. Capacity: 75. Rates: \$25.00 to \$35.00 per week. Superintendent and Medical Director: — Dr. Robert B. Homan”

In the 1927 the old building was put up for sale there is a description in the Masons newsletter THE BUILDER MAGAZINE - April 1927 - volume 13 - number 4, The old Homan hospital is described as (the article is edited for length)

“ The Association has an opportunity to buy the Tuberculosis Sanatorium formerly operated by Dr. R. B. Homan, in El Paso, Texas. The property is favorably located. The Main Building has a capacity of nearly one hundred patients. This building also contains the dining rooms, kitchen, etc.

There is another brick building containing twenty four patients' bed rooms and there are also four small cottages for patients. In addition there is a small building for employes and a four-room bungalow for nurses, or which may be used as a superintendent's residence.”

1925-1930 The “New” Homan Sanatorium -Southwestern Hospital "The place of a thousand windows."



They found that the old building needed to be expanded more to accommodate the influx of patients. So it was decided to build a new Sanatorium. A parcel was found on the corner of Cotton and Erie streets, and building started in May 1924. O.H. Thorman was the architect and Jennings Construction was the contractor. The cost of the building was \$200,000.

The Sanatorium is described as having 104 private room and 3 floors for beds, with two elevators - one large enough for a bed. The center of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor is a assembly room and roof garden with comfortable chairs, writing desks and magazine tables.

1925 Opening day Photo from the El Paso Herald Post Feb 15

There are no drapes here. The assembly room and roof gardens was used for Sun Baths, Radio concerts, picture shows and other entertainment. Dr Crimen said that sociability was encouraged and heated trays would be sent up to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor area with food. The Sans was described as very homelike and pleasant, with soft colors instead of the tradional white. The floors are painted with Ripolin,



1927 Assembly room 4<sup>th</sup> floor



1927 Drawing

Sanatorium operated quietly caring for those who came. With the advancement of medicine, drugs and the Depression, the need for a TB Sanatorium began slowly wane. Since there were several in the El Paso area, it was decided in 1936 to convert the Homan Sanatorium into a General Hospital. It was a very active year for the personal at the Sanatorium with a lot of changes.

The old Hospital was sold and given into the care of 5 Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kanas at the request of Bishop A.J. Schuler on Aug. 20,1927. It was operated until 1970 when the El Paso Cancer Treatment Center was built there.

Some notable mentions from the El Paso Herald Post.

Mar. 1935 A 19 year old female Collage of Mines student took posion “near the Homan Sanatorium”. No reason given.

In May, 1936 it was reported in the El Paso Herald Post that they “May convert Homan San into Hospital”. It was also reported in the same article that there was a serious need for another General Hospital in El Paso as the other two were over taxed with waiting lists.

In June 1936 \$25,000 worth of Homan Sanatorium stock was sold. It was reported that Drs. Homan Sr. and Crimen were holders of all stock, spilt 50/50 between them.

Aug 1936 a radio speech was given, from the sanatorium, by a patient, John D. McCraw, for his brother – William McCraw, reelection campaign for state Attorney General.

In Sept. 1936 Bids from 5 construction companies were being reviewed. The improvements included an Operating room, additions and other changes to the building.

Oct 10, 1936 it was announced that patients would be moved to St Joseph’s hospital, that the staff would be working there for the 2 months remodeling took.

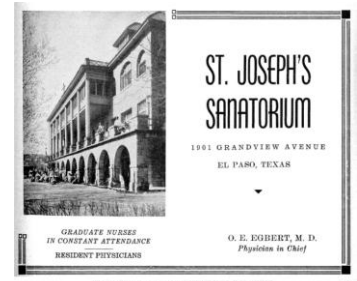
Oct 20,1936 a \$6,000 Building permit was issued for improvements to the building. It was reported that the improvements would cost \$50,000. And the work was being done by J.E. Morgan and Co.

The remodeling took 3 months. The first floor was now a new x-ray department, offices and wards. The second floor was the surgery floor, with operating and recovery rooms, and rooms for recovering surgery patients. The third floor was the OB, delivery and nursery. The newest equipment for the surgery was used, “luminaire” lights developed in 1936, operating tables that could be completely controlled by one person from the head of the table. The 150 beds were new “posture” type that could be raised and lower to any position by means of a crank. The newest in x-ray machines were

the first floor is painted in “café au lait,” the second floor in French gray. Bathrooms are in white. The newest in Fire proofing was use, and lights that “did not shine in the Patients eyes”.

The executive force was listed as Dr. Crimen – Superintendent, Dr R.B. Homan – Medical Director, Dr W.W. Brittion and Dr Ralph Homan associated Medical Directors and E. H. Homan Business manager.

From the years of 1925 to 1935 the





install in the Lab portion of the building along with lead lined walls. The mattress' and soft coil springs were an invention of Dr. Crimen's and made by the El Paso Laundry. They could be easily turned by one nurse.

The remodeled and new Southwestern General Hospital opened its doors Jan. 30, 1937 at 7 PM. This appears to have been a very welcomed event in El Paso. Southwestern was thought to be the best in modern Hospital technology. Ads were taken out in the Herald Post welcoming and thanking the hospital and its staff for its efforts in improving the health care of El Paso.

Some Firsts for the new hospital

Feb 1 1937 – The first patient admitted gave birth to first baby born at Southwestern Hospital. The daughter of Mr and Mrs. C.H. Richards born Feb. 1, 1937 at 1:25 A.M weight was 7 pounds. If you read the newspaper articles, it appears that they opened a little early for the first patient. Opening time was stated as 5 PM. The second patient was A.H. Hughey, superintendent of school for a foot ailment. The first emergency room patient was Simona Hernandez treated for a broken ankle. There were 15 patients and 5 operations were performed by the time the newspaper went to print that day.

Friday Feb 5, 1937 ads in the Herald Post

**EL PASO WELCOMES**  
**a New Modern Institution**  
**THE SOUTHWEST**  
**GENERAL HOSPITAL**

One of the Finest Institutions of  
 Its Kind In the Entire Southwest


We are happy indeed to welcome this new institution to El Paso and the great southwest a fine, new, modernly equipped hospital for the purpose of expanding the health facilities of our community.

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*We Compliment*  
**The Southwestern General Hospital**  
 In Expanding the Health and Life Saving Facilities of Our City

We are proud of the many healthful services we have rendered in the furnishing of your institutions with new and modern mattresses, sterilizing your blankets and linen and the cleaning and sizing of your rugs.

Anticipating For You A Successful Future

901-11 S. Santa Fe St.

Phone Main 470

**FAMOUS NAMES IN PAINTING**

The Southwestern General Hospital

Glidden

**SPEED-WALL**  
 Semi-Gloss Finish Was Selected Because SPEED-WALL lives up to its name. Under favorable drying conditions you can put two coats of SPEED-WALL on in one day. Don't bother with slow drying polishes. Use SPEED-WALL 95c qt.

**JAP-A-LAC**  
 4-Hour Enamel  
 \$1.45  
 Quart

**and**

**RIPOLIN**  
 Original Holland  
 \$1.00  
 Quart

**It's Easy With GLIDDEN**

**FLORENAMEL**  
 \$1.00  
 Quart

**GLIDDEN PAINT STORE**  
 112 N. Stanton Main 3888

**O. H. THORMAN**  
 ARCHITECT

First National Bank Bldg. El Paso.

Congratulations to the new Southwestern General Hospital upon its opening—it has been a pleasure to assist Drs. Homan, Crimen and The Staff in the planning of this new El Paso institution.

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Congratulations and Best Wishes  
 to the  
**Southwestern General Hospital**

May we continue to serve you with the best.

**BORDER SERUM & DRUG CO.**  
 Wholesale Druggists  
 "Quality and Service"

Phone M. 148-149. 300 So. Florence.

First "Premie" born Feb. 8 1837 was Andy Sutherland who weight 4 pounds at birth went down to 2 ½ pounds and 6 days later was at 4 pound 9 ounces.

Feb 11 Clothila Munster became head nurse. (note - born 1907 Germany naturalized 1923 – 1930 census in Dallas at St. Pauls Nurses home and Hospital)

Feb 2 Miss Marguerite Hentzen was appointed office Manager

In Nov, the Hospital saved a little boys life, he was kicked in the by a mule and developed an infection. Not knowing what type of infection he had without brain surgery, they put a call out for Field mice to test on. After testing the mice, they determined what type of infection he had and how best to take care of it.

These are just a few examples of the Medical treatments at the hospital in 1937. Using a glass boot with positive and negative pressure to help blood flow in a leg, stretching the spine of a polio victim to remove curves cause by polio so the child would not need crutches, Cataract surgery , running the state ward for crippled children, and working with the Junior League nurses to provide outpatient treatments and follow up.

During this time period focus slowly turned from TB to Polio, until the mid 1950s when the Salk and Sabin vaccines were widely given to children

## Crippled Children Are Happy With Tree In Hospital Ward



"O. K." said these five children when the doctor said they couldn't go home for Christmas. Here they are with their tree the Junior League gave them getting ready for their party at Southwestern General Hospital. Left to right: Jacob, Russian born, of Mexico City; Willard, Frances, lying down; Armin and Francisco. Armin, 15, is a law junior of Austin High School, although he has never been in the school. He's studying at the hospital and gets his assignments through his sister. The doctor said they would have to...

Christmas 1937 at Southwestern Hospital

1938 was a year of changes and interesting events

In 1938 the El Paso chapter of National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (March of Dimes) had their offices at the hospital

Dr. John C. Crimen Sr. died and his son John C. Crimen Jr. took over as superintendent of the Hospital.

In Jan of 1938 a 28 year old janitor who worked at the First National Bank building fell off a step ladder while cleaning the wall and hit his head on a lavatory ( sink or a toilet). Several SWGH doctors had their private offices in that building during the time. Dr. Turner rendered aid and sent him to SWGH, where he died. It is speculated that this might be the beginnings of stories about the ghost "Charlie" who has been seen for a very long time around the hospital

Taken to Tingley Hospital



Jean Clark, 15-month-old, glances out at the Southwestern General Hospital, now used as the Oliver Sanger Hospital for Crippled Children at the corner of 2nd and 10th streets. Jean had so much trouble that everyone who visited the hospital wanted to adopt her. They left her two hours in a car, since she refused the hospital. Feb. 1937. Jean was born with a dislocated hip. It was not discovered until she died in 1938. "She's a sweet girl in a little white," said Dr. John Crimen, Southwestern Hospital superintendent, as Jean left for her home.

Two long term guests at SWGH in 1937 and 1938

Left 15 month old Jean who was born with a dislocated hip and spent from Feb. 5 to Sept. 1937 in SWGH

Right is "Topsy" who was raised for the first months of her life in SWGH by Nurses Mary Lynch and Edith Harris until her Uncle took custody of her. 1938 Picture is of her at 4 ½ months with her two "moms"

'Topsy' Lost Her Mother, So Nurses Take Care of Her



A left is Miss Mary Lynch, "Aunt Mary" in Topsy, motherless baby at Southwestern General Hospital, and at right is "Mommy," Miss Edith Harris, holding Topsy.

The 40s and 50s were quiet years mostly. In 1943 Dr. Homan Sr. died and his son took over the running of the hospital. In 1946 Bill Burton was appointed adminstror. Building additions to the hospital continued with a 4<sup>th</sup> floor Obstetrics department and physical therapy added In 1947. SWGH continued to service El Paso and the surrounding New Mexico counties.



ENJOYING HANDICRAFT — Mrs. Fern Newland, left, smiles as she watches Virginia Boco, a young "burn" patient in Southwestern General Hospital, work with her loom. Most of the children in the ward come from New Mexico and have a few friends or relatives in El Paso.—(Photo by McElroy)

The high points till around 1954 were a personal ad for the return of a stolen doctor's bag taken out by Dr. Homan and a mention of a little "book" written by a Nurse's 11 year old son about "What I think of the Medical Corps".

In 1954 Mrs. Fern Newland was spotlighted for her help on the children's ward. She taught crafts and read books for the children who were in the burn ward. "it takes no experience for this type of work, just a love of children" She says.

In 1961 a man fell or jumped from a window at SWGH and died. His children filed suit against the Homan - Crimen Corp in 1977 for negligence.

Dr. Homan Jr. was President of the hospital from 1943 to 1972. At which time it was sold to Medenco. Until it's sale, SWGH was the largest (1969) or 2<sup>nd</sup> largest(1955) private hospital in Texas, depending on the year and person writing. Privately owned by the Homans and Crimen families since 1910/11, in a 1969 interview Dr. "Bob" Homen Jr. stated that he, the Crimen and Allen Burton families owned the hospital and that Dr. George Turner owned stock. The Board of Trustees were last reported as Homan Jr. as president, Crimen's widow as vice president and Dr. George Turner as secretary-treasurer. Also on the board were Mrs. A. Clay Gwin, daughter of Homan Sr., and Miss Johnell Crimen, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Crimen. Bill Buirton, son-in-law of Dr. Crimen, was administrator of Southwestern from 1946 to 1976.

In 1974 SWGH had a "face lift", new elevators, electric beds, tv and phone in each room, 25 of the rooms were totally remodeled, a new and improved 4 bed intensive care unit on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is the medical floor, and the OB unit was moved to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. New fire escapeds were installed, x-ray was upgraded, a in house laundry was installed and the hospital kitchen remodeled.

In 1975 the Red Cross honored several Nurses for their hours of community service at SWGH- Mrs. Olivia Bell, Mrs. Ruth Carlton, Mrs Betty Irvin, Mrs Alice Lackland, and Mrs Brenda Michalson.

In 1977 there was a fire in one of the hospital rooms after a patient was discharged. An employee put it out.

Medenco becamas Lifemark which in turn was bought out by American Medical International. In 1986, Gateway Medical Systems of Atlanta, Georgia purchased the hospital. In 1988 Gatway was bankrupt and the hospital was closed down except an emergency clinic till 1989.

The Hospital Staff, Helen Williams and Bill Behnke, who was the CEO, put together a group of investors, mostly phyicians and local businessmen, leased the hospital with a option to buy it. The buy out was done in 1991, money was put into the hospital to upgrade equipment and services and in 1995 they formed a limited partnership and purchased the Hospital. Funds continued to pour in and more upgrading was ongoing.

In 2005 the hospital was purchased and now called El Paso LTAC. They are currently remodeling the hospital.

#### Sources

El Paso Herald Post archive at ancestry.com

The caregivers : El Paso's medical history, 1898-1998 / writer, Barbara Funkhouser ISBN 0944551394

Misc. pamphlets on file at Southwestern General/ El Paso LTAC