132 things you probably don't know about State Hospital South

As the hospital celebrates and marks 130 years of service in Idaho, here are 130 things to know about the hospital and its history in Idaho.

1. In 1883 Territorial Legislation authorized building the Idaho Insane Asylum at Blackfoot for $20,000.

2. Building started on a 7-acre tract of land donated by Watson Shilling in 1885. This included a 10,000 gallon water tank, windmill, a three-story wooden building and sheds.

3. The hospital first opened its doors on July 18, 1886, with 26 men and 10 women "inmates" who were transferred by covered wagon from an asylum in Oregon. Idaho was granted statehood four years later.

4. Dr. John W. Givens was superintendent at the hospital from 1886 – 1895 and 1897 – 1905.

5. In earlier years, department heads were housed in cottages on campus so they would be immediately available for after-hours duties. Much of the nursing staff were housed in large dormitories or apartment buildings.

6. In 1887, there were 30 admissions to SHS.

7. Before 1889, rocks were mined and inmates and employees used them to make bricks. They used a kiln to burn 75,000 bricks for a new building that was two stories high. Bricks were used later to build many of the hospital buildings.

8. In earlier years, patients were given SHS tokens for their labor. These tokens could be used to purchase items at the Canteen and Country Store at the hospital.

9. By 1888, 73 acres of land surrounding the hospital was purchased. Of these, 45 acres were cleared, irrigated, and cultivated.

10. In 1889 there was a disastrous fire that destroyed the main hospital building and caused $25,000 in damage, as well as the deaths of 26 men and women. Dr. John W. Givens, superintendent at the time, was credited with helping save many from the fire.

11. The graveyard was developed in 1889.

12. The first recorded burial in the hospital cemetery was John D. Campbell, who died Feb. 17, 1890.
13. Construction of E Building (also known as the Kirk McBride Building) started in 1891 with a three-story brick building measuring 50 x 50 feet.

14. E Building included a brick oven that had the capacity to bake 400 pounds of bread and measured 10 x 12 feet.

15. The Biennial Report of 1892 listed the payroll at $9,543.67. The cost of care and treatment for one patient was 85¾ cents per day and $313 for one year.

16. In 1892, the first Medical Superintendent of the asylum, John W. Givens, M.D., made an annual salary of $2,500. The cook made $540 per year. All employees also received board, lodging and had their laundry done at the asylum. All employees were allowed two weeks of vacation per year.

17. In 1896 the hospital census was 518.

18. In the earlier years of the hospital, in addition to their wages, every hospital employee received room and board, plus a stipend of food from the farm.

19. At one time, the Dietary Department was self-sufficient because the hospital had its own farm, cattle, and chicken coop.

20. The hospital's farm included over 3,000 acres of land, 22 acres of orchards with at least 1,500 fruit trees, a dairy, a cannery, a slaughter house and apiary for 90 hives of bees.

21. The SHS farm was so productive that it also provided food to State Hospital North, Idaho State School and Hospital, and the territorial prison in Boise.
22. Farm products produced from **1895 – 1896** included: 60,000 pounds of beets, 4,144 pounds of butter, 40,000 pounds of carrots, 400 dozen eggs, 125 tons of hay, 134,737 pounds of milk, 300 bushels of potatoes, and 876 bushels of wheat.

23. The Oregon Shortline Railroad, later bought by the Union Pacific, had a spur line that connected with the hospital. It brought coal to the hospital and transported farm products to other institutions.

24. In **1899** the hospital received the first electric power from American Falls for the well and 12,100 acres of land was fenced.

25. In **1903** the census reached 257 inmates. The cost to provide for each inmate was 38 cents per inmate per day.

26. A **1908** Report of State Board of Health stated the following about The Idaho Insane Asylum at Blackfoot: “The food is good quality and well cooked; the kitchen utensils are kept clean and the meats, milk and butter are cared for in a sanitary manner.”

27. A **1908** Report of State Board of Health stated the following about The Idaho Insane Asylum at Blackfoot: “The normal capacity of the institution is for 150 inmates but at present there are 255. An old building is being remodeled and fitted up and when completed the congested situation will be relieved.”

28. Strait Jackets were used at the hospital until **1909**.

29. From **1916 to 1918**, 325 patients were admitted: 101 were housewives, 75 farmers, 68 laborers, 21 miners, 18 maids, 12 sheepherders, and 7 soldiers.

30. During World War I, Gray Ladies, who were volunteers from the Red Cross, helped with the general care of patients, with recreational and occupational therapy, and helped escort patients on outings.

31. D Building on campus was built in **1921** and used for a patient ward until **1950**, then a dormitory for employees. In **1953** it was converted into an isolation building for tuberculosis patients.
32. The Stone Cottage building built in **1921** was used primarily as an employee dormitory.

33. F Building, also known as Stevens Hall, became the men’s ward in **1933**. It housed 126 male patients.

34. Most of the occupational therapy rooms, such as the Carpenter Shop and Craft Room, were in the basement of F Building, along with the supply store and bakery.

35. The Carpenter Shop was popular with the patients. For their woodworking projects, patients made furniture for the hospital. The public could purchase items such as tables, bookshelves, and rocking horses in a showroom.

36. In **1922**, a farm superintendent was hired and had the responsibility of scheduling patients for work, as well as hospital staff, and was given a “mansion” to the northeast of the hospital.

37. In **1923**, physical examinations for all new patients became standard treatment.

38. In **1926**, a new laundry was constructed with fire escape chutes, 200 horse power boiler, new well, cold storage plant and 525 feet of tunnels built from the boiler to the buildings.

39. A production report in **1927** from the hospital sewing room included the following being made: Dresses – 93 dozen; dish towels – 155 dozen; strait jackets – 20 dozen; aprons - 32 dozen; men’s gowns – 22 dozen; curtains – 85 pairs.

40. The number of patients on Jan. 1, **1927**, totaled 338, which included 197 males and 141 females.

41. The number of elopements (unauthorized absences) from Jan. 1, **1927**, to Nov. 30, **1928**, was 40 (25 returned). The number of discharges / paroled was 153.

42. From Jan. 1, **1927**, to Nov. 28, **1928**, the total salaries and per diem labor was $69,606.52. Phone and light bills with electrical power, supplies and electrical work was $7,203.55. Laboratory supplies (drugs) were $948.36. Supplies and equipment for the farm and dairy was $17,868.66. Cleaning articles (soap, washing powder, lye, lime) was $6,713.54.

43. A production report in **1928** from the hospital sewing room included the following being made: petticoats – 26 dozen; napkins - 8 dozen; suspenders – 12 pairs; coffee strainers – 14; men’s shirts – 18 dozen.

44. Cash receipts in **1928** from farm products was $2,700.53. From livestock, the cash receipts totaled $4,494.22.

45. The Report of Department of Public Welfare dated Dec. 20, **1928**, noted that “transportation of patients has been a problem and...recommend the purchase of a closed automobile for this purpose. The truck we have is open and almost impossible to use for a trip of any length and cannot be used at all in severe winter weather...and it is in use almost constantly for moving of supplies.”
46. In 1928, the hospital had a supervisor of women who was also a stenographer and registered nurse. Her “combined qualifications and applied ability have made a marked change in the appearance and discipline of the wards.”

47. The laundry building burned down in 1929, three years after it was built.

48. G Building, also known as Sarchet Hall, was the new women’s ward in 1933. It housed 116 female patients.

49. A sewing room, beauty shop, and kitchen and dining room were in the basement of G Building. Female patients enjoyed working with fabric and made many items used at the hospital, including aprons, sheets, pillow cases, and braided rugs. These items were available for the public to purchase.

50. In the earlier years of the hospital, lobotomies were performed in an operating room, which is now the 2nd street day area at Syringa Chalet Nursing Facility. This area was chosen for surgeries because there are many windows that provide a lot of light.

51. Reports do not indicate when professional nurses were added to the hospital staff. As late as 1929 there was no appropriation made for salary for a nurse. In a 1938 report, a superintendent of nurses was mentioned. A three-month-course of affiliation in psychiatric nursing was started on Sept. 15, 1938.

52. In 1930 there was a legislative investigation for overcrowding. There were 150 inmates in one building.

53. The number of patients peaked at nearly 800 patients.

54. Legislation in 1931 changed the hospital’s name from Idaho Insane Asylum to State Hospital South.

55. In 1933, milking machines replaced hand milking of 83 purebred Holsteins. SHS cattle won top prizes at the local state fair.

56. A report from 1936 showed 45 hospital employees.

57. C Building (now a skilled care nursing facility called Syringa Chalet) was built in the 1938 for $178,000, when an investigation of overcrowding determined the extra space was needed.

58. The kitchen in the basement of the Utility Building had a grease fire in the late 1940s. There was extensive damage and several patients and staff were injured.

59. The food allowance per patient was 17 cents per day in the 1940s.

60. C Building was originally the hospital’s medical clinic building that included an elevator, surgery, x-ray and lab.

61. In 1933, the patients were classified into three main wards: the Convalescent Ward for men and women, the Violent Ward for men and women, and the Criminal Ward for men.
62. Some of the principal psychoses listed for patients admitted to the hospital between 1938 and 1940 included dementia praecox, manic depressive, senile, involitional melancholia, epilepsy, cerebral arteriosclerosis.

63. During a visit from legislators in January 1939, there was 1 nurse to 30 or more patients, and at night there was 1 nurse to 92 patients. The average cost of clothing for one patient for one year was slightly less than $3, which was noted to be inadequate.

64. During a legislative visit in January 1939, a "'potters' field on the property is disgraceful as to its unkempt condition, so much so that markers are almost lost from view in weeds." In response to this visit, the cemetery was piped for a sprinkler system and partly seeded.

65. In 1940, a large dishwashing machine was purchase and installed at the hospital. Other equipment also was installed, including a mechanical mixer, a three-deck baking oven, Cleveland steamer, and a vegetable peeler in the kitchen, as well as a doughnut kettle in the bakery.

66. In 1940, 30,159, quarts of fruits and vegetables were canned at the hospital cannery, and a large part of the fruits and vegetables grown on the grounds were dried.

67. In October 1940, the inventory of hospital garden and farm equipment included: 8 saddles, 8 wagons, 1 bob sled, 3 hay mowers, 2 potato planters, 7 harrows, 2 grain drills.

68. By 1940 there were 20 student nurses at the hospital. Graduate and student nurses served the clinic building, which had 114 beds, and the retreat for voluntary patients, which had 47 beds.

69. The first trained dietitian mentioned in hospital reports was employed in 1938. A report filed in 1940 stated that "she has been able to make the food more attractive, has put more color into the vegetables, and has reduced waste."

70. From 1946 to 1947 there were 7,000 insulin shock treatments and 2,400 electroconvulsive shock treatments performed at the hospital by Dr. Freedman, a neurologist/neurosurgeon.

71. In 1946 the census listed over 600 patients. Staff included 1 physician, 1 surgeon, 1 psychologist and 1 intern.

72. From 1948 – 1953, food costs per employee per day were 83 cents.

73. Cost per patient per day in 1948 was $2.03. In 1953 it was $3.60.

74. In 1949, food cost the hospital 39 cents per day for each patient. In 1953 the cost was 80 cents per patient per day.

75. The time spent providing individual psychotherapy from 1951 – 1953 doubled that of individual psychotherapy in the previous three years.

76. In the 1950s, there were many opportunities for patients to participate in vocational training by working on the farm, in the engineering-maintenance department, in the
laundry, doing stenographic work for the secretarial department, working at the soda fountain, or as stockroom helpers in the warehouse.

77. In **1950**, there were 495 admissions to SHS.

78. The Utility Building was built in **1951** and housed the kitchen, bakery, cannery, and butcher shop in the basement. The first floor consisted of patient dining rooms and the recreation hall. The dining rooms are now meeting rooms. Patients and staff still use the rec hall.

79. Y Building was used from **1951 to 2002**. This two-story building housed the maximum security wards, with male and female patients in separate wings.

80. A walled recreation area, nicknamed the “bullpen,” was on the east side of Y Building and used by the maximum security patients, allowing them time outside in the fresh air.

81. In **1952**, there were 120 patients involved in music, education, and occupational therapy; 783 patients involved in industrial therapy; and 1,430 patients involved in recreational therapy.

82. The official census showed 766 patients in **1953**.

83. In **1953**, the hospital spent $11,638.05 on lab supplies and drugs.

84. In **1953**, a part-time pathologist performed 40 autopsies at the hospital.

85. SHS was a pioneer research site in **1953** for the development of Chlor-Promazine (Thorazine). It was the first major antipsychotic drug.

86. Farm produce over the years included: cantaloupe, celery, corn, currants, gooseberries, melons, peas, raspberries, spinach, turnips.

87. The hospital dairy was considered one of the finest Holstein herds in the Western United States.

Norman Howell, LaMar Fullmer, Orson Callister, and two men who were not named are shown at
88. An A-grade dairy provided all of the dairy needs of the patients and staff. The farm was the focus of the institutional culture until it was abandoned in the early 1960s.

89. The new Administration Building was built in two parts; the two-story split level section was built in 1962, and the one-story section was built in 1966.

90. The Administration Building was designed by Paul Anderson, a social worker on staff at the hospital.

91. After the one-story section of the Administration Building was finished, admissions were handled through the entrance that now leads to the medical clinic. Patient treatment wards were also in this building at that time.

92. B Building was built to treat patients who were under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

93. Over the years, B Building housed an alcoholic treatment ward, a ward for boys, and living quarters for male employees. The structure was removed in 1973.

94. In FY1974, SHS had 258 full time employees and expenditures were $2,633,759.

95. In 1976, C Building was remodeled to meet Life Safety Code.

96. In the 1980s there were five treatment units at the hospital:

   a. Eagle Lodge (housed in A Building, 30 patients, acute care)
   b. Stepping Stones (housed in A Building, 30 patients, acute care)
   c. New Horizons (house in Y Building, 70 patients divided into four areas)
   d. Syringa Chalet (housed in C Building, 45 patients, geriatric population, an intermediate care facility)
e. Hoover IV (housed on top floor of C Building, 25 patients, medium security for patients acquitted of crimes because of mental illness)

97. The Adolescent Unit was established in 1984.

98. The Psychiatric Treatment Facility (PTF) was built in 1988 for $4 million to replace F and G Buildings.

99. The Psychiatric Treatment Facility (above) has a total bed capacity of 106.

100. In 1991, C Building became a geriatric skilled care nursing facility called Syringa Chalet (above).

101. A 17-bed, all-male forensic treatment unit, Hoover Minimum Security Unit, was on the top floor of C Building until it closed in 1992.

102. The hospital budget was $7.6 million in January 1986, with 282 employees. About 40 percent of patients were voluntary at that time. Admissions numbered about 520 per year.

103. In 1986, the campus area included about 46 acres of land. The total land owned by the hospital in the Blackfoot area was 1,600 acres, most of it leased for private farming.

104. In 1986, the hospital had four major divisions:
a. Division I was the specialty division with a geriatric treatment unit and medium security unit.

b. Division II was the general adult psychiatric unit with three programs: acute admissions unit, locked long-term patient unit, open pre-lodge program.

c. Division III was the general adult psychiatry unit with three programs: locked acute unit, specialized behavior modification program, and open unit.

d. Division IV was the adolescent unit.

105. In 1991, frontline hospital staff received 5,353 hours of training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, nonviolent crisis intervention and other topics. By 1992, the number of hours had risen to 7,839.

106. In 1991, one psychiatrist at the hospital served 35 patients, even though the standard for acute, short-term care was one psychiatrist for 12 patients. During this time, there was one recreational therapist for 21 patients, with the standard being one therapist for 9 patients.

107. In 1992, the hospital budget was $9 million, and it had 280 employees. The average length of stay for acute patients was 50 to 60 days.

108. Chandler Circle, circling the hospital grounds, is named after Dona Chandler, a former employee who was a nurse at SHS from April 1960 to August 1998.

109. The Townhouse on campus was a major endeavor completed in 1992. The structure had been earmarked for abandonment and eventual demolition, but it was renovated and became a functional office building for the Region 6 mental health program.

110. The hospital budget was $10.7 million in 1994.

111. State Hospital South achieved Joint Commission Hospital Accreditation in 1998.
112. In July 2002, it was reported that the 13-month remodel project in the Administration Building (above) was going well and on time, set to be completed in July 2003.

113. SHS has averaged 55,307 miles per year transporting patients since 2005.

114. In 2006, the average daily census for the Admissions Unit was 25.2 with the average length of stay at 30.5 days.

115. In 2006, the average daily census for the General Adult C Unit was 24.3 with the average length of stay at 121.0 days.

116. In 2006, the average daily census for the General Adult D Unit was 26.4 with the average length of stay at 224.8 days.

117. The hospital admitted 56 to the Adolescent Unit in 2002, and 79 in 2006.

118. The cost per day for Syringa in 2002 was $384. It was $479 in 2006.

119. In 2006, the daily waiting list for patients needing admission to a state hospital in Idaho varied from 10 to more than 25 days.

120. In FY2006, the cost per patient day was $472 and in FY 2015, the cost per-patient-day was $569.

121. In FY2010, the number of admissions was 466 and the average stay was 96.6 days. The average daily census was 104.5. The average age of patients was 37.6. There were 480 total discharges.

122. In FY2015, the number of admissions was 547 and the average stay was 72.7 days. The average daily census was 71.2. The average age of patients was 39.9. There were 552 total discharges.

123. The last recorded burial in the cemetery was June E. Huntley who died April 17, 1981.

124. Four unknown patients listed as “John Doe” are buried in the cemetery in 1901, 1926, 1928, and 1956.

125. Since 2012, State Hospital South has had a total of 77 students from 11 different schools complete their physician assistant, nurse practitioner, and medical student rotations. Several former students graduated from their programs and are now SHS employees.

126. In 2015, there were 710 admissions to SHS.

127. SHS provides mental health educational experience through clinical practicums for six of the state’s college of nursing programs. The hospital will provide this service to over 400 students this year.

128. As of June 2016, State Hospital South is close to admitting the 29,000th patient.
129. The hospital’s Dietary Department has served more than 39,509,568 meals since 1886.

130. The hospital is currently licensed and funded for 90 adult psychiatric beds, 16 adolescent beds, 29 skilled nursing beds.

131. The hospital has averaged 8,270 miles per month transporting patients in 2016.

132. SHS has transported an average of 45 patients per month for discharge so far in 2016.