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A History in Postcards: Osteopathic Hospitals

Robyn Oro

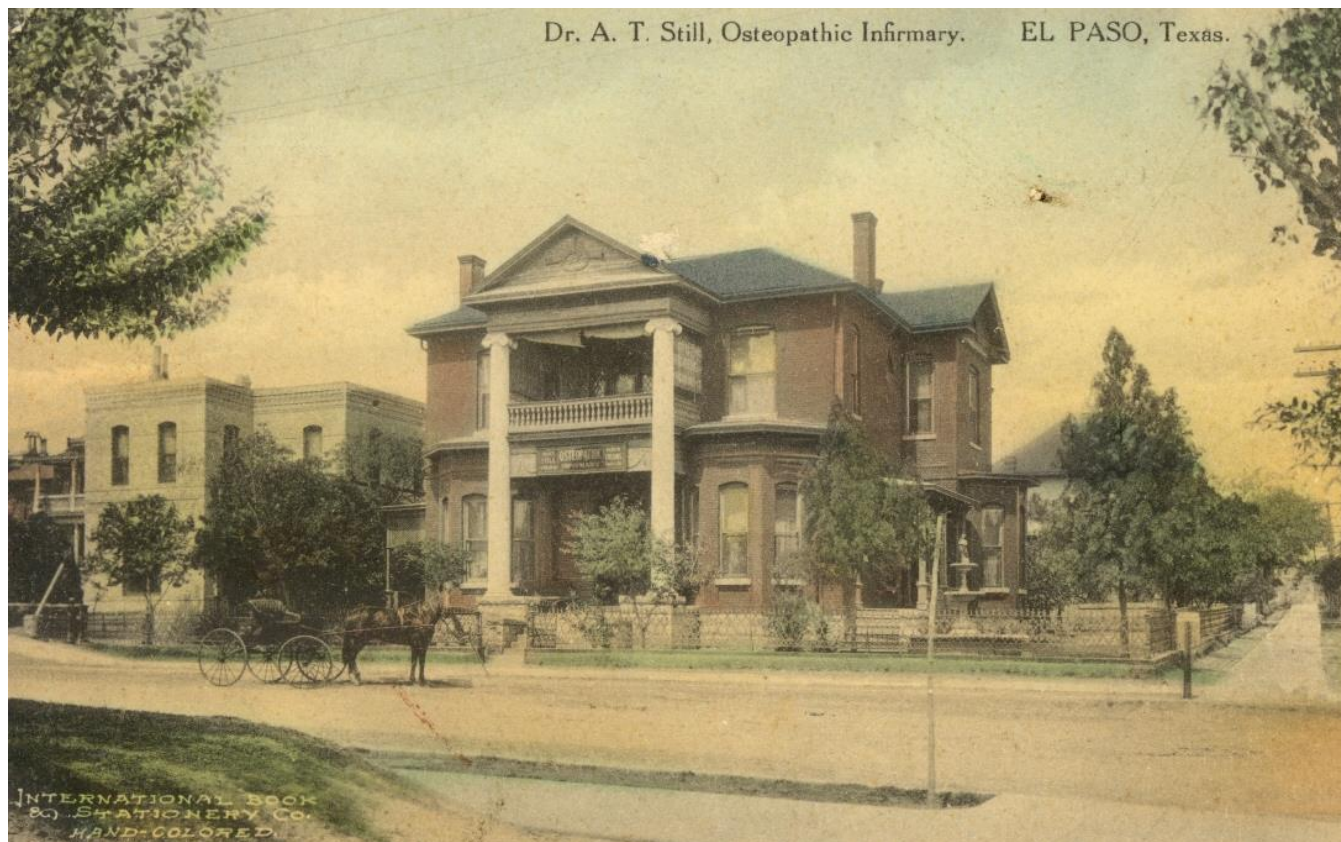
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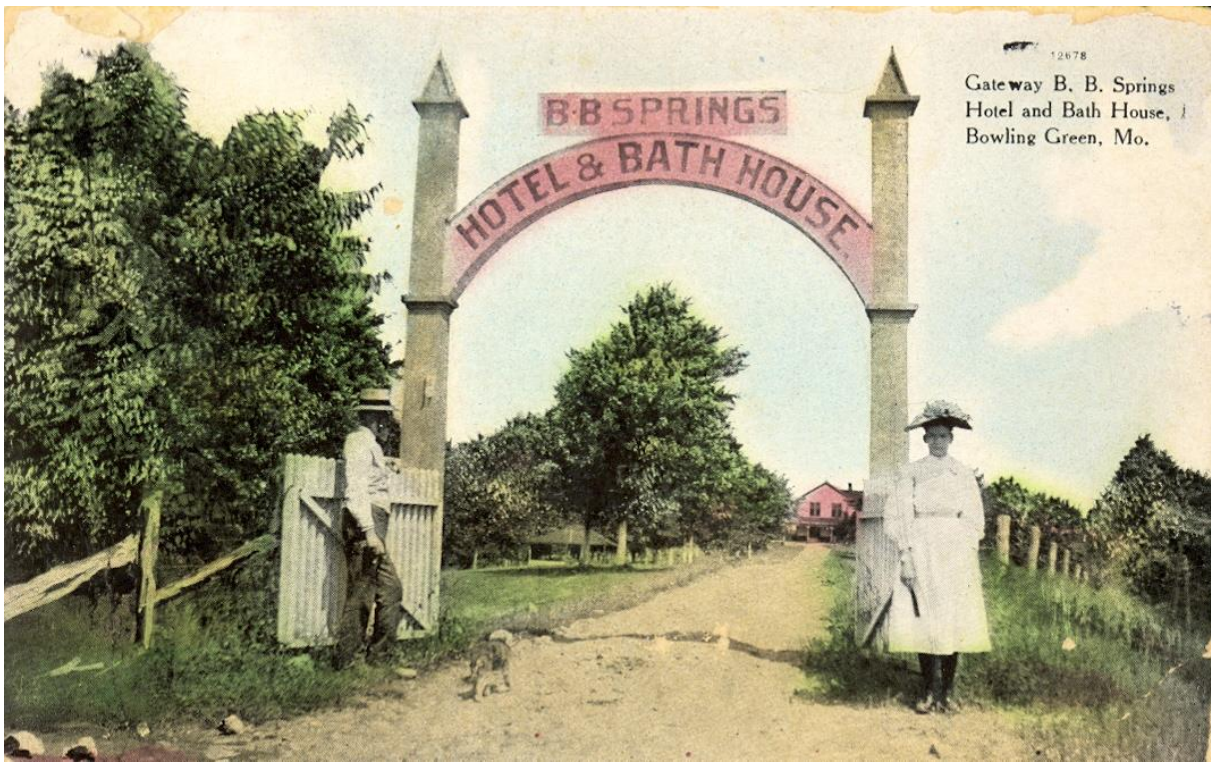
by Robyn Oro on September 27th, 2019



The postcard above is one of the oldest in the D'Angelo Library Archives. It depicts the A. T. Still Osteopathic Infirmary that opened in 1904 in El Paso, Texas by Ira W. Collins, DO, a new graduate of the American School of Osteopathy along with Dr. H. T. Still, one of A. T. Still's sons. Collins claimed it was a branch of the A.S.O. Infirmary in Kirksville, Missouri, the first health care facility in a school of osteopathy.¹

In the early 1900s it was not unusual for osteopathic physicians to convert private homes into hospitals or build additions onto their existing homes. Many of these facilities were smaller and more remote than the nation's allopathic hospitals and were early examples of osteopathy's emphasis on primary care and treating underserved medical populations.²

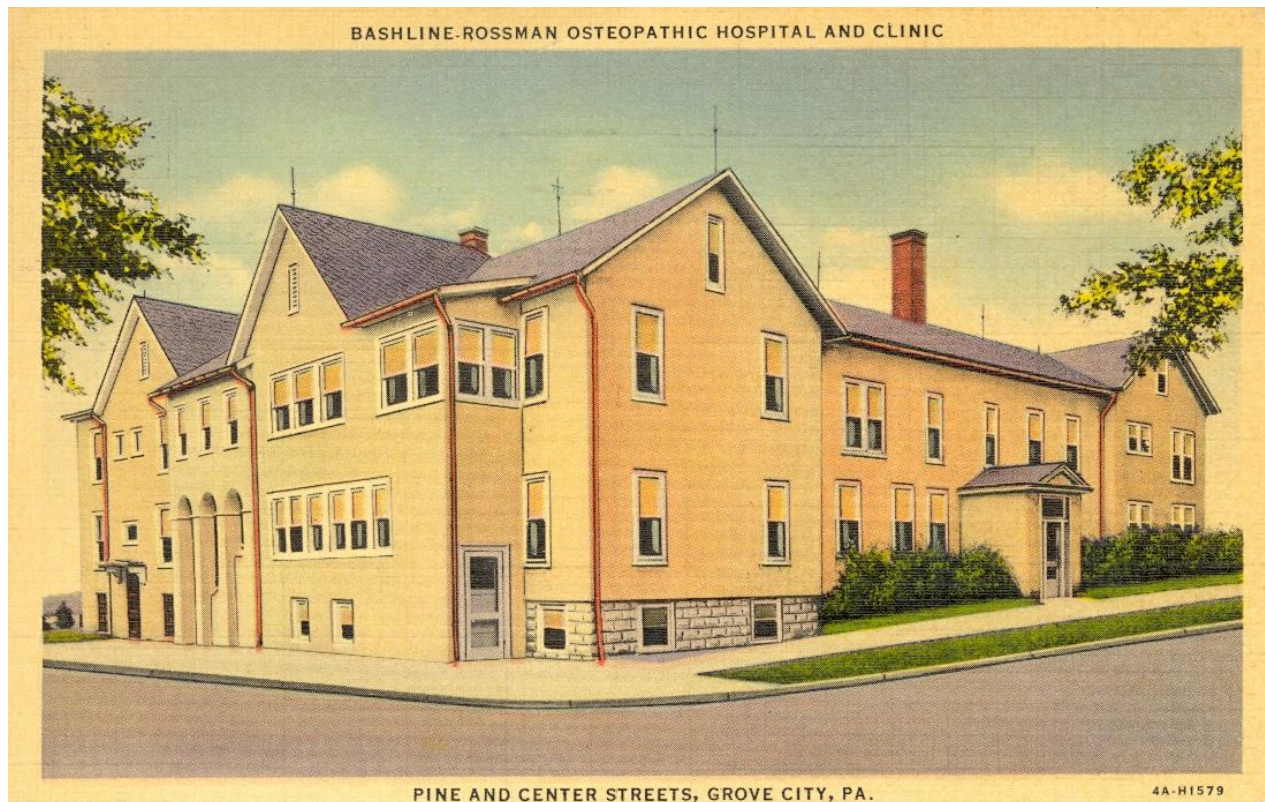
Though Dr. Collins took out numerous ads in the *El Paso Herald* for his infirmary as late as 1916, it is not known when the A. T. Still Osteopathic Infirmary closed.³ At any rate, it was not included in the 1924 Edition of *History of Osteopathy and Twentieth-Century Medical Practice* by E. R. Booth, which included the first comprehensive listing of osteopathic infirmaries and hospitals in the United States. One facility that was mentioned was the Bowling Green Sanitarium and Mineral Water Company, Bowling Green, Missouri. This postcard depicts its earlier existence as the B. B. Springs Hotel & Bath House.



According to Booth the Sanitarium "was organized in February, 1923, and was ready for patients June 1. It specializes in osteopathy and hydrotherapy, and has a completely equipped operating room for emergency cases. Capacity-forty patients. It is located on a beautiful, heavily wooded, thirty-two-acre tract valued at \$50,000. C. H. Downing, DO, president; R. H. Williams, DO, secretary and treasurer."⁴ Dr. R. H. Williams was the founder of Williams Publishing Company in Kansas City, Missouri that published many early pamphlets promoting osteopathy.



The building that would become the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Sanatorium was originally built as a private home by Charles R. Kopp, a patent medicine manufacturer. When a federal probe of his product, "Kopp's Baby's Friend" resulted in a federal investigation he lost the property. It was later purchased by Orrin O. Bashline, DO and operated as the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Sanatorium. Dr. Bashline was not associated with the facility for long and moved on to found the Bashline-Rossman Osteopathic Hospital and Clinic in Grove City, Pennsylvania. The mansion on Lincoln Highway east of York, Pennsylvania shown in this postcard was taken over by L. M. Crandall, DO and operated under the name Dr. Crandall's Health School. The building burned in 1949.⁵



Dr. Bashline and Walter F. Rossman, DO purchased a combination church/boarding house at Pine and Center Streets in Grove City, Pennsylvania after outgrowing a private home they had been practicing in. It wasn't long before the Bashline-Rossman Osteopathic Hospital and Clinic was also too small and additions were begun.⁶ This was a similar story across the nation as the 1920s got underway, and osteopathic physicians began building their own free-standing hospitals to accommodate the growing number of patients seeking osteopathic treatments.

More osteopathic postcards can be viewed at <https://digitalcommons.kansascity.edu/postcards/>

Notes

1. *Journal of Osteopathy* 1904; Feb:59.
2. Richardson, M. "Historically Speaking: DOs Have a Long History of Attention to Hospital Standards". *The DO* 1999;40:28.
3. "A. T. Still Osteopathic Infirmary". *El Paso Herald*. Sept. 5, 1916:5 accessed at Newspapers.com Sept. 26, 2019.

4. Booth E. *History of Osteopathy and Twentieth-Century Medical Practice*. Cincinnati, OH: The Claxton Press; 1924:743.
5. <https://www.yorkblog.com/comments-on-historic-resources-in-Springettsbury-Township> accessed April 25, 2018.
6. Grove City Bicentennial Committee. *Reflections of Our Past*. Grove City Chamber of Commerce; 1998:248-249.