

“If These Walls Could Talk...”

In 1997, when I came to interview with my future boss, Martin Hirsch, MD, asked me if I was OK to climb a few sets of stairs. His eyes were illuminated as he started telling me about the first surgery under anesthesia, explaining the pictures, the tools, and MGH's place in the history of medicine. I will forever be grateful for the Ether Dome to have revealed the soul of what makes MGH so great, the dedication and generosity of its doctors and staff.

—Francoise Giguel, laboratory supervisor
Harvard Virology Specialty Laboratory

When I first started at MGH in 1989, I used to enjoy taking my cafeteria tray to the Warren Library, a small library in the basement of Bulfinch, where employees were welcome to eat lunch while perusing books and magazines on offer. I miss that little haven!

—Pauline Lim, administrative/grants coordinator
Department of Molecular Biology

In 1974, my first job at MGH was the weekend secretary on Bulfinch 5 and 6. There were still patients in the Bulfinch Building in Male and Female Open Wards – 153 years after the first patient was admitted. That location on the second floor is now the site of the MGH Administration offices. What I remember most was the excellent nursing care patients received, in what would now be considered rather “primitive” circumstances, and how much everyone loved working there!

—Wendy DeMille, manager
Nephrology Academic Affairs and Dialysis Services

In my time at MGH I have seen many things change and buildings come and go, but the Bulfinch Building is one of the most interesting and iconic ones. From the dome to the museum to the stairwells, it is without a doubt the most impressive building of the group.

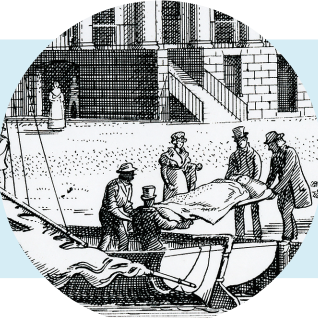
—Theresa A. Curley, patient services coordinator
MGH Revere HealthCare Center

When I started at MGH in 1970, I was a freshman co-op student from Northeastern University. I had rarely been inside any hospital before, let alone the sprawling, teeming network of buildings that was MGH that year. I was a shy introvert thrust into the bustling world of the Clinical Hematology Lab system and a sea of unfamiliar faces. In those early days, I spent many a lunch time in the Ether Dome with my first new MGH friend – Padi. Yes, my first buddy was Padihershef the mummy – the perfect lunch companion, not asking nor offering much in the way of conversation and never once testing my social anxiety. In those days, he stood erect in his glass humidor box, which enabled us to make eye contact as I sat in the first tier of seats with my brown bag sandwich. I have very fond memories of those lunches. I eventually made wonderful living friends at the hospital, but I never lost my connection with that beautiful quiet amphitheater nor with its resident Egyptian sentinel. I continue to stick my head in to say hi whenever I have the chance.

—Jeannie Casey, technologist
Core Lab Hematology

Two Centuries of Change

THEN & NOW



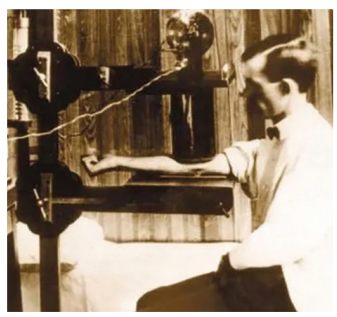
Patients and supplies were frequently **dropped off by boat** at the MGH wharf until the 1860s, when landfill moved the banks of the Charles River further west.

Today about **40% of patients come to the hospital via ambulance**, 50% by car and the remainder are brought here from MedFlight or public transportation, taxis and car services.



Early donations to the MGH's fundraising campaign included a a 273-pound sow and an **Egyptian mummy**.

A recent donation to the hospital is “**Open Arms**,” a **sculpture installed on the Bulfinch Lawn**, created from fallen Spanish live oak trees, thought to be roughly 200 years old.



Physician Walter J. Dodd, one of **the first radiologists in the U.S.**, was an early innovator in the use of X-rays in medicine, and in 1896, he produced the first X-ray exposure at a Boston hospital.



MGH Imaging has evolved to become one of the largest departments at the MGH, **offering more than 1 million examinations and procedures on an annual basis**.



Staff posed on the **Bulfinch Stairs** to celebrate achievements with their colleagues.

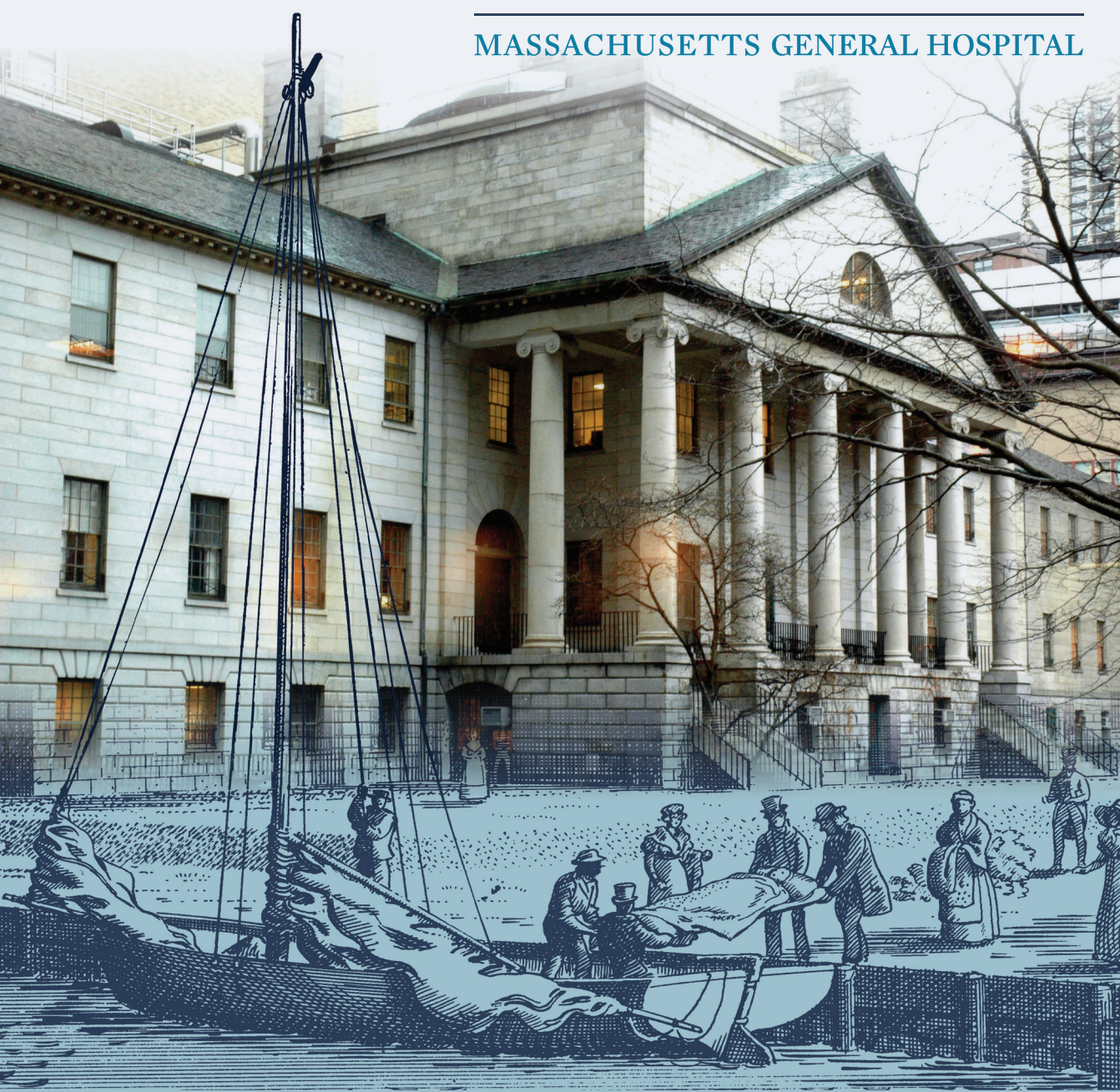


Some things never change. Staff continue to use the historic entryway to document major milestones in their careers.

MGH **HOTLINE** SPECIAL EDITION

200 years of Patient Care

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

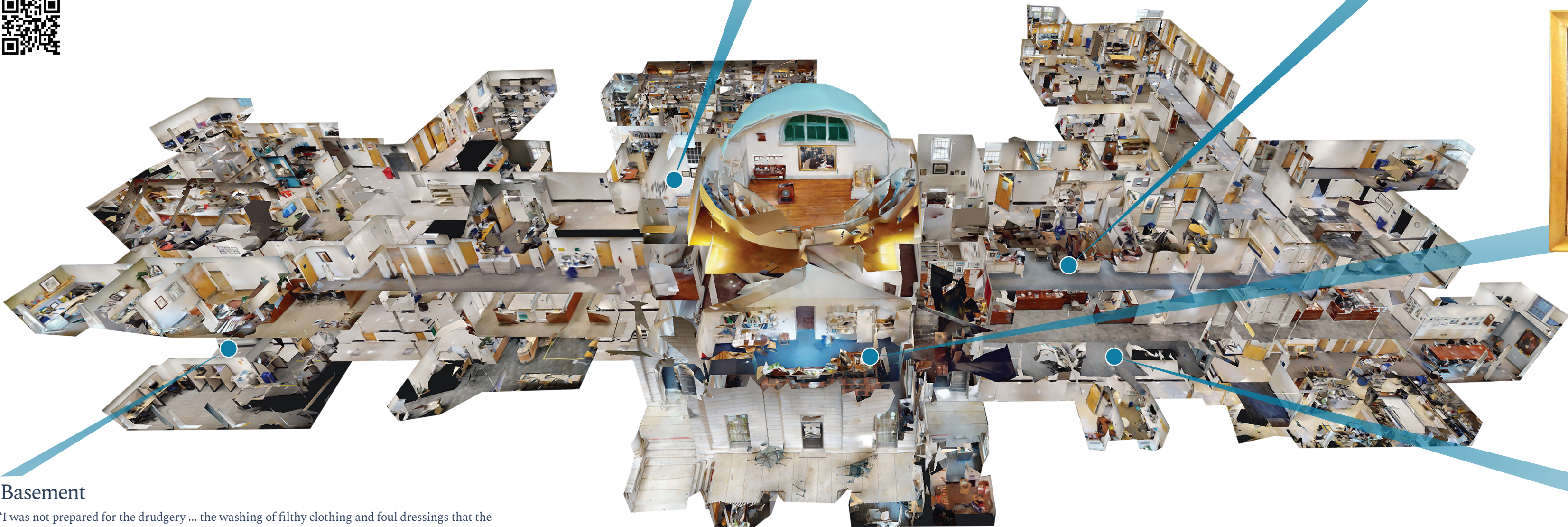


On Sept. 1, 1821, the first patient admitted to Massachusetts General Hospital arrived at its newly constructed Bulfinch Building, located along the banks of the Charles River. This young man, a 30-year-old saddler — a person who makes and repairs saddles for horses — came to Boston from Charleston, South Carolina seeking treatment for a complex infectious disease and major scourge of the 19th century — syphilis.

Since its inception, thousands of patients and staff have walked through and worked in the 36,000-square-foot Greek Revival-style Bulfinch Building's hallowed halls. On this 200th anniversary, we celebrate this majestic and iconic structure that has been home to an extraordinary list of clinical, academic and research firsts, has served as a warm welcome and beacon of hope and strength, and has cemented its place in history — and in the hearts of so many.

Stepping into history

Learn more about the MGH’s treasured historic Bulfinch Building through this in-depth, immersive 3D virtual tour, filled with photographs and highlights from the MGH Archives. Walk through the hallways, check out hundreds of interesting photos and facts on each floor, and enjoy videos of staff sharing their favorite memories, locations they love and architectural details that shouldn’t be missed. Open the camera app on your cellphone and point it at the QR code below to be brought directly to this interactive online tour.



Basement

“I was not prepared for the drudgery ... the washing of filthy clothing and foul dressings that the assistant nurses had to do. Cotton could only be bought at the most fabulous prices ... every inch of old cotton and gauze had to be used over and over again. All this foul washing was done in the ward bathroom, and then sent to the general laundry to be more thoroughly washed.”

—Georgia Sturtevant, who started as a nurse at the MGH in 1862



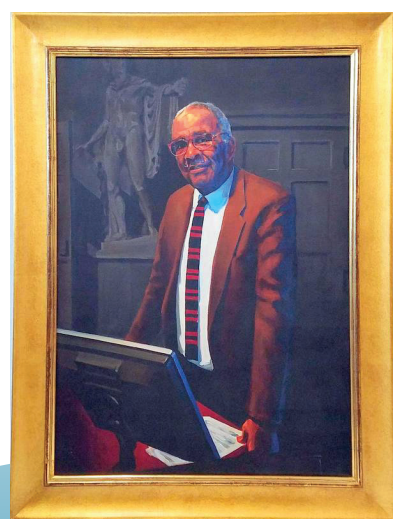
Floor 4

Jonathan Mason Warren, MD, (1811-1867) was an MGH surgeon best known for his work in reconstructive surgery. He was present at the first successful public demonstration of the use of ether for surgical anesthesia in 1846 and is believed to have been the first to administer ether to a child. Warren’s family had close ties to the hospital — his father was MGH co-founder John Collins Warren — and his wedding clothes are preserved here. Since the average man of British descent at the time was about 5-foot-8-inches, these clothes indicate that Warren was short for his day, as well as ours.



Floor 3

Originally called “East Medical 30,” the women’s medical ward was renamed Bulfinch 7 in 1939, when the wards were given a more consistent set of names. Patients who had diseases considered to be highly contagious and a public health threat were often seen in isolation wards, but some patients were treated in wards such as this one. They may have had tuberculosis, typhoid fever or pneumonia.



Floor 2

The portrait of psychiatrist Chester Pierce, MD, (1927-2016) hangs within the Trustees Room. Pierce researched the relationship between racism and health disparities and pioneered the concept of microaggressions – small incidents of bias that have a cumulative effect on mental health. He served as president of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and the American Orthopsychiatric Association, and as the founding president of Black Psychiatrists of America. He also consulted for NASA, the U.S. Arctic Research Commission and the Children’s Television Network. Pierce was the first African American full professor to work at MGH.

Floor 1

For much of the 19th century, this area was the known as the “accident room,” a predecessor to today’s MGH Emergency Department. Many employees also called it the “bathroom” because it had a bathtub, which was used for washing patients’ injuries. It was next door to the living quarters of the house pupils, known as medical and surgical residents today. There was a night attendant in the mid-19th century who was known for shouting “teeth in the bathroom!” into the house pupils’ quarters when a patient arrived needing a tooth pulled. A more experienced surgeon would be called for more complicated emergencies, but the house pupils were able to pull teeth.

