

# 1951



Early in 1951, industrialist Kurtis R. Froedtert expressed an interest in philanthropic support of medical education in the Milwaukee area. Froedtert was well known as the head of Froedtert Malting Company, the world's largest such firm. Despite his own declining health, Froedtert arranged a meeting with Dr. John Hirschboeck, dean of the Marquette University School of Medicine, to discuss his ideas. Unfortunately, Froedtert succumbed to cancer before the meeting was held.

Froedtert's wishes would be made real through his estate, which established a trust and designated an estimated nine to eleven million dollars for construction and establishment of Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital. Other charitable purposes included support for medical education and research. But Froedtert's investments in various enterprises limited the amount of funds actually available for immediate construction of the hospital.

*Philanthropist Kurtis R. Froedtert established the trust that provided funding for Froedtert Hospital to be created. He died in 1951 and it would be 29 years before his dream of an academic medical center would come into being.*

# 1952

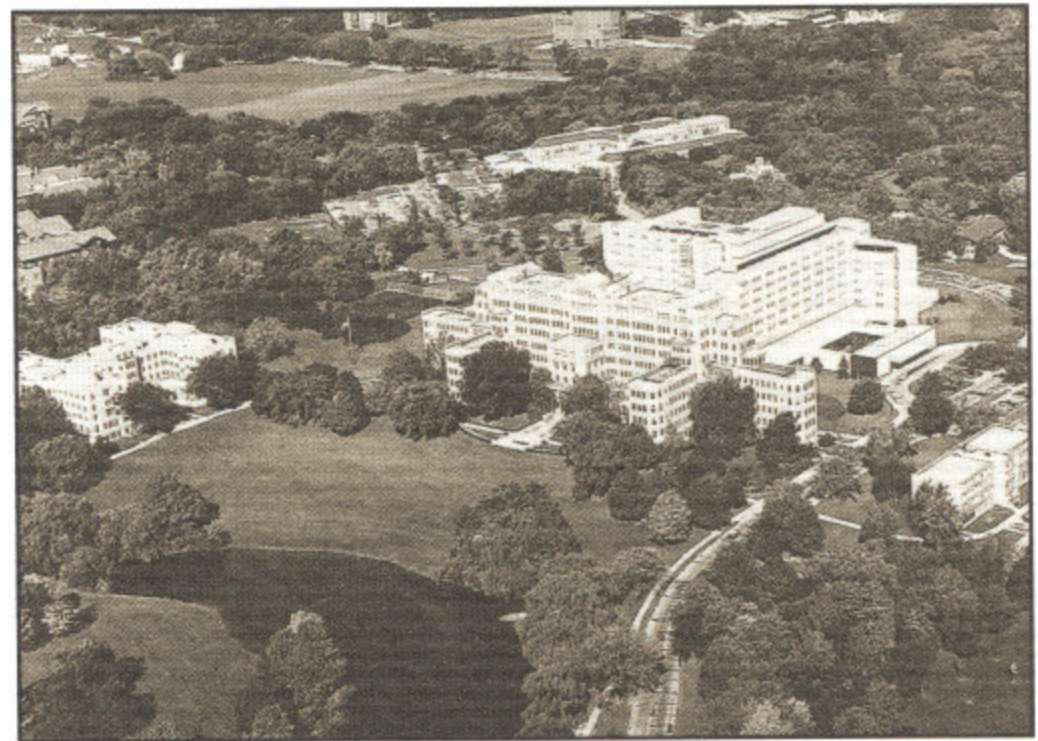
Seeking to fulfill Mr. Froedtert's intentions, trustees meet with Dr. Hirschboeck and develop the idea of establishing a regional medical center. Dr. Basil McLean of the University of Rochester is retained to study the Milwaukee-area health care environment. McLean recommends that Froedtert Hospital be built as a teaching and research hospital — as part of an academic medical center located on the County Institutions grounds. At the time, Milwaukee was one of only three metropolitan areas in the U.S. without an academic medical center.

# 1955

Trustees assume control of Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital and decide to build Froedtert on the grounds of that facility. A Minneapolis consultant, Dean Roe, is retained to resolve psychiatric hospital staff problems. He remains as the hospital administrator and later, a consultant to the trustees on Froedtert Hospital planning efforts.

# 1959

A new study reinforces the original recommendation that Froedtert Hospital be constructed on County Institutions grounds as a teaching and research facility affiliated with the medical school and County Hospital. Difficulties arise in the proposed affiliation of a "Lutheran" hospital with a "Catholic" medical school (Marquette). Years of litigation between the trustees and the Lutheran Men of America results, with final disposition postponed until 1965.



*An aerial view of the County Institutions grounds in the mid-1970s. The wooded area on the left side of the photo shows land leased to Froedtert for construction of the hospital.*

# 1962

Federal legislation establishes a nationwide network of medical centers to serve designated geographic regions. Each center is to include a medical school and affiliated teaching hospitals. Milwaukee and Madison are designated as regional centers and community leadership is organized for development of a regional medical center on County Institutions land.

# 1966

The Comprehensive Health Planning Act of 1966 creates health-planning agencies — organized geographically within each state. The seven-county area of Southeastern Wisconsin is governed by an agency with the power to confirm or deny plans for construction of health facilities or services, further affecting plans for the new regional medical center.

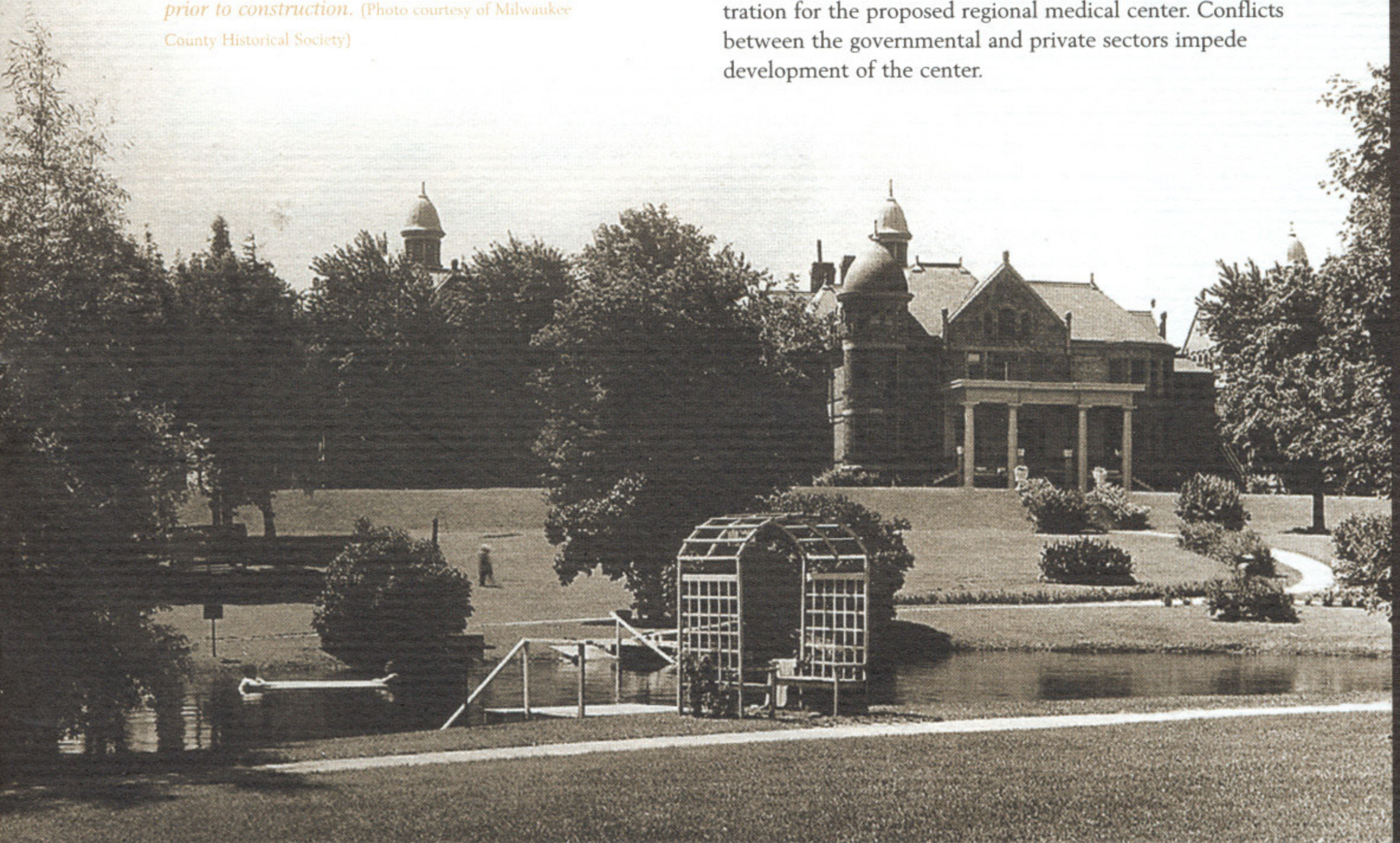
*Froedtert Hospital was built on the County Institutions grounds, atop a small hill overlooking a lagoon. This photo depicts the Victorian structure located on the property prior to construction. (Photo courtesy of Milwaukee County Historical Society)*

# 1965

A settlement is finally reached in the litigation between the trustees and the Lutheran Men of America. A hospital corporation is formed, governed by a 15-member board of directors with Richard Vogt as chairman. The court settlement dictates that the Froedtert trustees will continue to own and manage the trust, but will have no vote in deliberations of the Froedtert Hospital board of directors. This relationship continues today.

# 1967

Milwaukee County Executive John Doyne leads an effort to establish County government as the “landlord” of the project, with a council controlling planning and administration for the proposed regional medical center. Conflicts between the governmental and private sectors impede development of the center.



## 1970

Four private agencies enter lease negotiations for county grounds property, but negotiations break down over the issue of shared costs for roadways, utilities, water and sewer services, and other items private agencies find unacceptable. The lease disputes aren't resolved for several years.

## 1976

The Milwaukee County Board approves Froedtert Hospital's lease on January 15. Later in the year, a formal 100-page application for a 300-bed hospital is submitted for approval by the Southeastern Wisconsin Health Systems Agency. Existing area hospitals object to the application, claiming the additional hospital beds are unnecessary. Froedtert explores a merger with Lutheran Hospital, and a consolidation of operations at the new site. The effect would be a decrease in the number of excess hospital beds in the Milwaukee area.

## 1977

On January 5, officials of the three hospitals announce the agreement to merge. Froedtert Hospital's application is amended to list a reduced capacity of 278 beds and is approved. Approval is contingent upon the condition that Froedtert, Lutheran and Deaconess Hospitals effect a merger to reduce excess beds. Groundbreaking ceremonies take place on September 14. Kurtis Froedtert's wife, Mary, takes part in the ceremony, along with hospital board officers and members. Completion is scheduled for mid-1980's.

## 1980

A six-week strike by construction workers delays the opening of the hospital until late September. Wisconsin Governor Lee Dreyfus is the principal speaker at the dedication ceremony, attended by more than 1,000 people, including Mary Froedtert, her children and grandchildren. A special plaque honoring the memory of Kurtis Froedtert is unveiled at the dedication ceremony. The plaque is located in the atrium of what is today the West Hospital lobby. The first four patients are admitted during the dedication ceremony. Prior to the dedication, public tours attract more than 9,000 visitors.

*The property lease for Froedtert Hospital was signed in 1976. Attending the signing were, from left to right: Froedtert President and CEO Dean Roe, County Executive John Doyne, Froedtert Board Chairman William Jahn, and County Board Chairman William O'Donnell.*

