

ROSE Z. ANGELL



If the Hunterdon Medical Center had a single founder -- the person who initiated the movement to create a hospital -- that person was Rose Angell, the Director of Welfare for Hunterdon County from 1932 until she retired in 1961 at the age of 78.

She was a native of Mishicot, WI. Mrs. Angell received her R.N. degree from Trinity Hospital in Milwaukee in 1903. After two years as head of the operating room at Madison General Hospital, she began to teach domestic science. In the next several years, she was named Director of the Milwaukee Society for the Care of the Sick, organized the Retired Nurses Emergency League, and opened a school for "cadet nurses" (the equivalent of practical nurses) in order to provide home care for those who could not afford "trained" nurses. Mrs. Angell, along with her husband and three children, moved to Hunterdon in 1924, and remained at her *Story Brook Farm* home in the Woodglen section of Lebanon Township until her death in 1965.

In 1932, Mrs. Angell's extensive experience in nursing and welfare was brought to a focus when she was asked to inaugurate the Hunterdon County Welfare Department. In addition, she was a charter member of the county Mental Health Association, the Homemakers Society, and the state Welfare Council. She also founded her local P.T.A.

In administering the county's appropriation for hospitalization of people who could not pay, she was forced to deal with a problem which nobody had the courage to challenge -- that of providing an in-county hospital. And she proceeded to look for the answer to this problem.

In 1942, just a few months after Pearl Harbor, Mrs. Angell wrote to the director of the Commonwealth Fund, known for its pioneering program in establishing rural hospitals. She requested consideration for the program, and described the then-current method of providing hospital care for the indigent, in four hospitals in neighboring counties. At the time of the letter, a total of \$9,800 was appropriated each year for care. It was felt that Mrs. Angell and her staff obtained the utmost in value from a very limited budget.

The director of the fund indicated that they would back only one hospital a year; they had already chosen one for the year, and their plans for continuing were quite uncertain. However, Mrs. Angell refused to let the goal of bringing a hospital to Hunterdon drop. Only four years later, she and Mrs. Louise Leicester brought such a proposal to the County Board of Agriculture. And that organization, which agreed to study the need, took on the job of pushing for a hospital with widespread community support. It was Rose Angell's ideas which gathered momentum and resulted in the distinguished institution known as Hunterdon Medical Center.

(See Hunterdon Medical Center Founders, page 81, for more information.)