

Red Cross celebrating 75th anniversary

The Cleveland County Chapter of the American Red Cross will mark the 75th year of service in this county since its was chartered on July 9, 1917. The original certificate was signed by President Woodrow Wilson.

The chapter invites all volunteers, former volunteers, board members, former board members and former chapter chairmen to its 75th anniversary celebration, annual meeting and volunteer awards presentation and covered dish supper on Thursday, July 9, at 6:30 p.m. at the United Way Building, 132 W. Graham Street, Shelby.

The Cleveland Chapter's petition for organization was signed by Mrs. O. Max Gardner, whose husband was lieutenant governor at that time. Also signing were: Selma C. Webb, Foy Moore, Ora Eskridge, Mrs. Lee B. White, Mrs. Robert L. Ryburn, Mrs. W. B. Nix, Mrs. C. R. Hoey, C.C. Blanton and J.F. Roberts. Mrs. Gardner and Mrs. Hoey served as first chairman and vice-chairman respectively. Miss Webb and Miss Moore were secretary and treasurer.

The Kings Mountain Chapter of the Red Cross was organized almost simultaneously that July. Signing the petition to form the Kings Mountain Chapter were: C.K. Bell, J.E. Berryhill, W. R. Beach, B. A. Culp, R.M. Hoyle, G.L. Kerr, Dr. J.E. Anthony, Dr. J. Sydney Hood, J.R. Davis, E. L. Campbell, Dr. L. P. Baker, F.E. Finger, E. W. Barnes, W.R. McGinnis, A. H. Patterson, W.A. Mauney, F. Dilling, C.E. Neisler, M.E. Herndon, F.W. Orr and George E. Lovell. Kerr was named first chapter chairman. Other initial officers were Mrs. M.L. Plonk, vice-chairman; P.D. Herndon, treasurer; and Miss Bonnie E. Mauney, secretary.

The American National Red Cross was founded in 1881 by Clara Barton. She previously had worked with those wounded on the battlefields during the War Between the States. Clevelanders from Kings Mountain to Casar sprang to follow the Clara Barton traditions in 1917 when the United States entered World War I. The two local chapters were founded to help with the war effort. The Kings Mountain Chapter covered the No. 4 Township and Grover while the Cleveland Chapter covered the remainder of the county. The two chapters merged in October 1964.

The Red Cross in World War I was charged, through its chapters with supplying bandages, surgical dressings, hospital bags and Christmas gifts to the military forces. They also gathered clothing for refugees.

Historical records in the local Red Cross Chapter contain interesting highlights of the efforts during that time and in later years. It

was noted that in Shelby, Mrs. O. Max Gardner's father lent (rent free) two rooms in a downtown building as Red Cross workrooms. Others loaned sewing equipment.

"Women throughout the county were spurred into a rounding cutting, sewing and needlework. They knitted socks and sweaters against a deadline, frantically raveling when the finished product did not fit the specifications . . . book clubs met in the workrooms instead of homes and sewed instead of reading . . . the non-knitters donned surgical masks and cut out bandages . . . newspapers listed volunteers' names with the postscript, "These ladies are expected at the workroom without further notifying."

Another newspaper article stated, "To raise money, young ladies were posted at cotton gins across the county to beg a pound of cotton from every farmer. The pounds were put together in bales and sold for Red Cross to buy supplies."

Even though involved in the war effort, Cleveland County found itself fighting an enemy at home -- the 1918 influenza epidemic. Red Cross volunteers went into homes to care for the sick. They helped establish an emergency hospital in the Baptist parsonage in Shelby.

Throughout its history, there have been wars. World War II saw a reopening of the Red Cross workrooms; the production of thousands of pounds of clothing and bandages; and contributions of up to nearly \$50,000 a year. Nurses, ambulance drivers and volunteers were recruited throughout the nation to serve overseas as Red Cross personnel. Red Cross, for many years following World War II, worked to clear its name of the stigma that it charged servicemen for coffee and donuts. The Red Cross, which has never accepted money from the U.S. government and is supported entirely by voluntary giving, was asked to establish club facilities for U.S. servicemen overseas where troops for all Allied forces would be welcome. The British high command then made an official request that U.S. servicemen be required to pay for whatever they received, just as Britain and our other allies had to be because voluntary contributions were not the pattern in other countries. The Red Cross was adamantly opposed to this concept and protested vehemently. However, they lost the fight, in a letter dated March 20, 1942, from Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, to Norman Davis, America Red Cross Chairman, forcing them to go along with the request from our allies. The Red Cross clubs operated at a loss and represented a heavy financial burden.

Red Cross has worked to overcome that 50-year-old P.R. by still

helping people to avoid, prepare for, and cope with emergencies when and where they occur. We are known throughout the world as nonsectarian and nonpolitical with our mission remaining to help prevent and relieve human suffering.

Cleveland County was a charter participant when the Charlotte Regional Blood Center was inaugurated on Tuesday, Sept. 28, 1948. Approval from the local Red Cross Board of Directors was secured by Hal Houpe, chapter chairman, from Dr. Z.P. Mitchell, Cleveland County Health Department; the Cleveland County Medical Society; Hospital Directors through Joe Hamrick, administrator; and Dr. Phil Elliott, president of Gardner-Webb College. Endorsements came from many other sources: The Chamber of Commerce, schools, civic organizations, the Ministerial Association, etc. Mr. Larry Moore was appointed to serve as the first Cleveland County Blood Program Chairman.

The first bloodmobile came to Shelby on Oct. 8, 1948, and was sponsored by the Elks Club. Sixty pints of blood were collected. During the following year all visits were held in Shelby with the Elks Club and Junior Chamber of Commerce as sponsors. The first rural visit was held in Lawndale. The earliest bloodmobile schedule found in the records was for 1950-51 and shows the county was given a quota of 800 pints with 11 visits scheduled. Our projections show that by the end of this fiscal year (June 30, 1992) we will collect an estimated 6,110 units of blood with over 100 visits scheduled.

This chapter has a long and rich history of providing not only the two services mandated by Congressional Charter, Disaster and Service to the Military, but many others dictated by community need. The work in this chapter touches many lives: disaster victims are cared for; service members and their families are helped through many crises; people are taught and are applying the self-reliance skills of Red Cross CPR, First Aid, Water Safety, etc.; blood is collected to meet an evergrowing use by hospital patients and is separated into a wide range of components and derivatives to meet specific patient medical needs. Seventy five years ago we would not have dreamed of replacing hearts, lungs, kidneys and other transplants nor that blood could be spun down to provide platelets for cancer patients or white cells, red cells, plasma or cryoprecipitates would be used for other medical needs.

We have had to respond to new times and conditions all through the years. Community needs have been met with new programs:

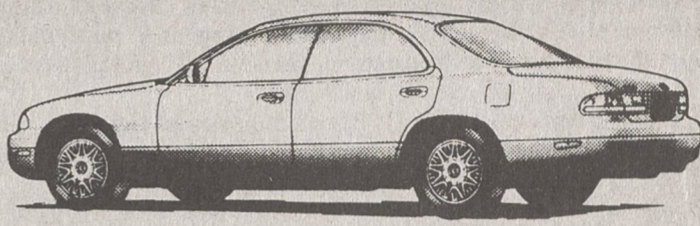
Emergency Transportation (Inclement Weather); Autologous Blood Donation program (self donation for non-emergency surgery); Recruitment of Bone, Tissue, Marrow donors; and our newest program, Emergency Blood Transportation. This program was added this year at the request of the Charlotte Regional Blood Center for emergency delivery of blood products to regional hospitals after hours and on weekends.

Our Red Cross continues to face challenges for the future. We are unsure of what tomorrow may bring as a provider of emergency services nor can we imagine what medical breakthroughs may occur, whether there will be war here or in other parts of the world, how the AIDS epidemic will affect millions throughout all civilization and other problems we cannot even envision. We now have four AIDS instructors trained to teach classes, have provided thousands of pamphlets to schools, doctor's offices, the Health Department, etc., but this situation today may only be the tip of the iceberg. Saddam Hussein could cause Operation Desert Storm II and heavy Red Cross involvement once again.

We must find ways to recruit additional volunteers and resources for sufficient funding necessary to provide for the continually increasing demands of Red Cross services and programs. The unstable economy, recession, cutbacks in federal funding of many program has increased the responsibility for agencies to assist in human needs. National Red Cross has expended the disaster budget and asked industry, individuals and chapters to fund raise to meet the deficit. The United Way problems will increase the possibility of cutbacks in allocations such as we had this year. Large capital fund drives by other local groups such as the library, Cleveland Memorial Hospital, Senior Center and YMCA all lower the available dollars to be raised. We are fortunate that our capital fund drive in 1981 allowed us to build the new building as we had rented since the early days. The mortgage was paid off in 1984 and we grew and expanded until in 1989 when we once again had to raise funds to build an addition.

Please R.S.V.P. for the celebration next Thursday by July 6 to the Red Cross at 487-8594.

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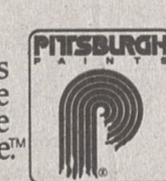




4th July Celebration
Honoring Guy Eaker
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