



use of which was donated by the W. C. T. U.”

With the opening of the hospital, “the *Auxiliary* felt that with these first efforts their work was only just begun, and in the intervening years have been glad to render assistance in many directions.” Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised by the *Auxiliary* through the years and their efforts in fundraising have been exceeded only by the hours of volunteer service contributed by their members. The hospital’s name has changed through the years, and the *Auxiliary*’s name has followed, but the *Auxiliary*’s commitment has been consistent and unwavering.



On August 19, 1966, then-President of the United States Lyndon B. Johnson formally dedicated the new *Ellenville Community Hospital*. The *Ellenville Journal* claimed that 7500 people were present in the village to welcome LBJ, “the first visit by a President of the United States.” The *Ellenville Press* had an eight-page pullout section reporting the great day, and a

book, *The Day LBJ Was Here*, (Photo, left) was published.

Administrator Dane Bors-Koefoed, who had begun his Ellenville career as laboratory technician at *Veterans’ Memorial*, and had been named administrator in 1952, saw it through the building program which resulted in the new *Ellenville Community Hospital*, nursed the hospital through its first accreditation in 1968 and subsequent re-accreditation, retired in December of 1986.



Photo, above, at the 1966 Hospital dedication, including, left to right, Sen. Jacob Javits, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, Mrs. Joseph Resnick, Lady Bird Johnson, Rep. Joseph Y. Resnick, President Lyndon Johnson, and Rabbi Herman Eisner, offering the Benediction.

Sadly, the last years of the twentieth century were crisis years for the *Ellenville Community Hospital*. On April 14, 1999, the hospital filed for bankruptcy protection under Chapter 11. In early 2000, the Kingston Daily Freeman announced an agreement under which the Westchester Health Care Corp. would buy the hospital for \$1.5 million, plus a one-million dollar line of credit for improvements and \$1.35 million to offset monthly operating losses of \$150,000. Substantial community

contributions would be necessary.

In December 2000, the name was changed to *Ellenville Regional Hospital*, operated by Westchester Ellenville Hospital Inc. In September 2003, Kingston Regional Health Care took over day-to-day operations, with Steven L. Kelley as administrator. Sadly, *Ellenville Regional Hospital* is again in dire financial straits.

It may be fitting to close this historical review with the closing paragraph from the 1949 Development Drive of the *Veterans’ Memorial Hospital*: “Yes, there our hospital stands. The question for each thoughtful person to answer is: Am I standing squarely behind it?”

(Thanks to the *Ellenville Public Library & Museum* for use of the extensive vertical file material which provided the data for this article. All photos are from the collection of, and printed courtesy of, the *Ellenville Public Library & Museum*.)



Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

As you may know, *Ellenville Regional Hospital* is in the midst of a financial crisis. Having this hospital in the Ellenville/Wawarsing area is critical to the survival of the southern Ulster County community and its residents. If this hospital closes, people will die. There is no doubt about that. The time that it will take to drive someone to Kingston, Middletown, or Monticello will mean the difference between life and death for some of our residents and visitors.

My late husband and his brother – Lou and Harry Resnick – helped found this hospital. We were fortunate enough to be able to donate significantly to the hospital over the years. Many in the community have contributed, also. Supporting the hospital is an ongoing need. I call on all citizens in the community to help now! Please use the hospital services, call your elected leaders to voice your opinion, and generously support the fundraising drives that are underway.

I personally have been a patient at *Ellenville Regional Hospital* twice in the last year alone, and I regularly use their outpatient services. We need others to do the same. I encourage our local doctors to refer their patients to *Ellenville Regional Hospital* for care, whether inpatient or outpatient. We need our local residents to use the services provided by the hospital. Along with its fine inpatient care, *Ellenville Regional Hospital* provides emergency room, physical therapy, laboratory, radiology, diabetes education, cardiology, ophthalmology, oncology, urology, pain management and other services on an outpatient basis. Finally, I would like to remind our local politicians of all stripes to support the hospital.

We need your help to ensure the survivability of *Ellenville Regional Hospital* and of our local community. Thank you.

Mildred Resnick
Ellenville