

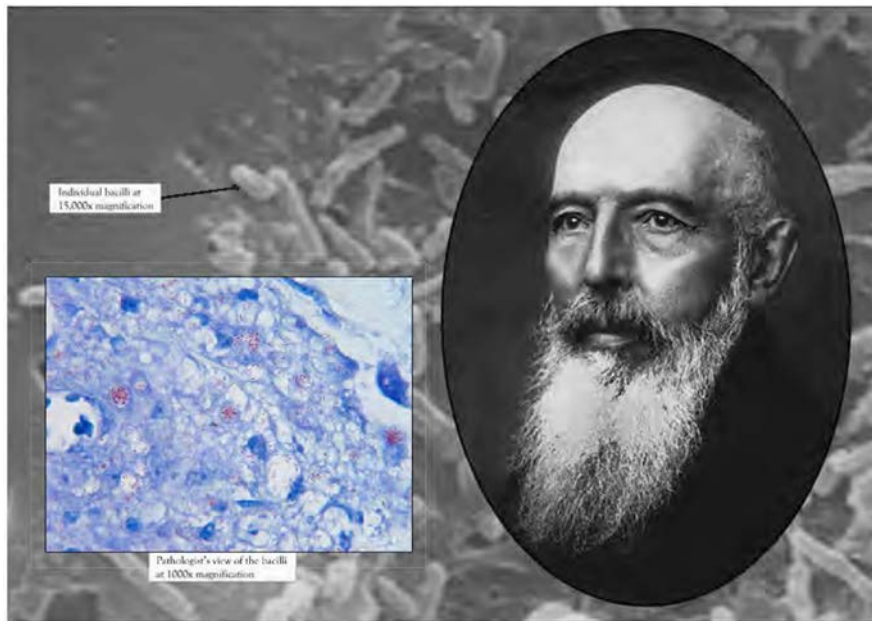
# Stigma



Fifteenth century artwork depicting leprosy.

The stigma associated with leprosy is deeply ingrained in human history. Many religious traditions considered the disease a "curse from God" rather than a medical condition. Fear that the disease was highly contagious (it is not) led to quarantine.

# The Germ



Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen, a Norwegian Doctor, discovered the germ in 1871

*Mycobacterium leprae*, the germ that causes leprosy, is a bacillus. It is related to tuberculosis (T.B.), but unlike T.B., leprosy is not easy to catch. Only 5% of the world's population is susceptible to the disease. In the 20th century, "leprosy" was renamed "Hansen's disease" in honor of Dr. Hansen's historic achievement.

# Effects on the Body



Fingers and toes can become deformed over time due to nerve damage with subsequent injury and tissue absorption.

Hansen's disease affects the nerves and skin. Nerve damage can cause muscle weakness and lack of feeling. Repetitive injury and infection over time can create deformity. The eyes can also become damaged resulting in blindness.

# State Law

## Louisiana's Lepers

A new Colony where all the Afflicted  
are to Be Segregated

After years of effort, Louisiana has reached a solution of its Leper problem, and is now gathering all its Lepers, several hundred in number, at the Indian Camp, on the Mississippi River, in Iberville parish.

Printed in the Catholic Standard Newspaper, February 1895.

The Louisiana Leper Home was established in 1892 following passage of Act 85 which required all people with leprosy in Louisiana to be confined in an institution. In 1894, Act 80 created a Board of Control for the Louisiana Leper Home. The board selected a site for the home in Carville, Louisiana.

# Daughters of Charity



Sisters with young patient in the early 20th century.

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul arrived in 1896 to nurse the patients and provide management of the Louisiana Leper Home. The Catholic order of nursing sisters served their Catville mission until 2005.

# Louisiana Leper Home



A Catholic priest visiting a patient, c. 1896.

The Louisiana Leper Home was intended for Louisiana patients only. Other U.S. states wanted a quarantine location for their leprosy patients and pressured the U.S. government to create a national quarantine hospital.

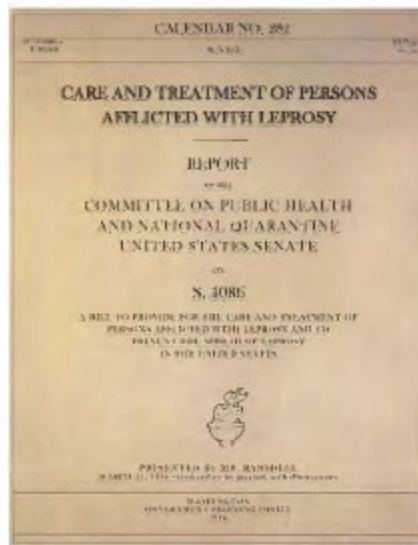
# Early Treatment



Chaulmoogra oil was prescribed at the hospital until the 1940s.

Chaulmoogra oil, pressed from the seeds of a tree found in India, was the standard treatment for leprosy at the Louisiana Leper Home. It was applied either using oil oaked gauze, by injections or in pill form. Unfortunately, chaulmoogra oil gave little or no medical benefit.

# Federal Laws



Congressman Joseph E. Ransdell of Louisiana supported the bill to create the National Leprosarium.

In 1917, the U.S. Congress passed S. 4086, a bill for the Care and Treatment of Persons Afflicted with Leprosy. In 1921 Carville became the National Leprosarium, admitting patients from any state that had a law quarantining leprosy.



# State to Federal Transfer



Dr. Oswald Denney and his wife (right) raise the flag over the National Leprosarium, 1921.

In 1921, when the Leprosarium was transferred from the state to the federal government, the U.S. Public Health Service was assigned to provide medical care for patients who arrived from around the U.S. As a result of federal involvement, the Daughters of Charity became federal employees and the hospital was expanded and modernized.

# Hospital Policy

1. The hospital will enforce state and territory quarantine laws.
2. The hospital will provide care, detention and treatment of persons with leprosy.
3. The hospital will confirm or disapprove diagnosis of leprosy.
4. If diagnosis confirmed—treatment. If disapproved—discharge.
5. Patients will submit to routine clinical examinations and take prescribed treatments.
6. Patients are not allowed to leave the limits of the reservation.
  - a. Patients shall not visit the quarters of patients of the opposite sex without permission.
  - b. No patient shall willfully destroy or damage government property.
7. Isolation or restraint of patients is allowed to protect themselves and others.
8. A board of examiners will review patients for discharge.
9. After discharge, the medical officer in charge shall notify proper health authority of the state in which the patient now resides.
10. Visitors may be admitted under the rules prescribed by medical officer in charge.
11. The hospital shall be administered in accordance to regulations governing the hospitals of the U.S. Public Health Service.

The Medical Officer in Charge had some discretion in policy enforcement.

"Regulations Governing the Care of Lepers: Regulations for the Government of Leprosaria and for the Apprehension, Detention, Treatment and Release of Lepers" were drawn up by the Surgeon General in 1922 to carry out the 1917 legislation.

# Federal Hospital



Aerial view of the buildings and grounds in the 1960s.

By 1941, the federal government had rebuilt the hospital to house 450 patients. Personnel had their own neighborhood, separate from the patients. The hospital complex had a water treatment plant, electric plant, laundries, golf courses, chapels, dormitories, recreation center and modern infirmary. It was a self-contained community.

# U.S. Public Health Service



U.S.P. H.S. staff in front the infirmary, 1960s.

The mission of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps is to protect, promote and advance the health and safety of the United States. The U.S.P.H.S. at Carville became world leaders in the treatment, research and rehabilitation of Hansen's disease.

# Sulfone Treatment



Patient "Joey G." receiving an injection of Promin from Dr. Rolla Wolcott, 19 40s.

Dr. Guy Faget called for patient volunteers to try a new treatment in 1941, the sulfone drug Promin. Promin treatment was given by intravenous injections. According to *The Star*, "new treatment renewed hope that leprosy ultimately will be conquered." (February, 1944)

# The Miracle at Carville



Progression of drug treatment shown in patients, left to right.

In the 1950s, following 10 years of increasingly successful sulphone drug therapy, scores of patients were medically discharged. Those who were newly diagnosed had the option to receive treatment from a doctor outside of the hospital.

# Patients



Young patients enjoy watermelon in the 1930s.

Over 5,000 patients had lived at Carville while receiving treatment between 1894 and 1999. All ages, cultures, races and socio-economic groups were represented. No matter the race or country *of* origin, men are diagnosed twice as often with H.D.

# Carville Culture



The hospital's boy scout troop, c. 1950

Carville's hospital developed its own culture. Holidays were celebrated with a unique flair, from Mardi Gras to Halloween. Many patients ran their own businesses, played team sports, belonged to religious organizations and even published their own newspaper - The STAR.



# Advocacy



Patients prepare The Star for worldwide distribution, 1940.

Patients lost many civil rights in the early decades of quarantine. In the 1940s, patients protested through their magazine, The STAR. Groups like Disabled American Veterans joined the fight. The patients' right to vote was restored in the late 1940s and their right to marry in the 1950s.

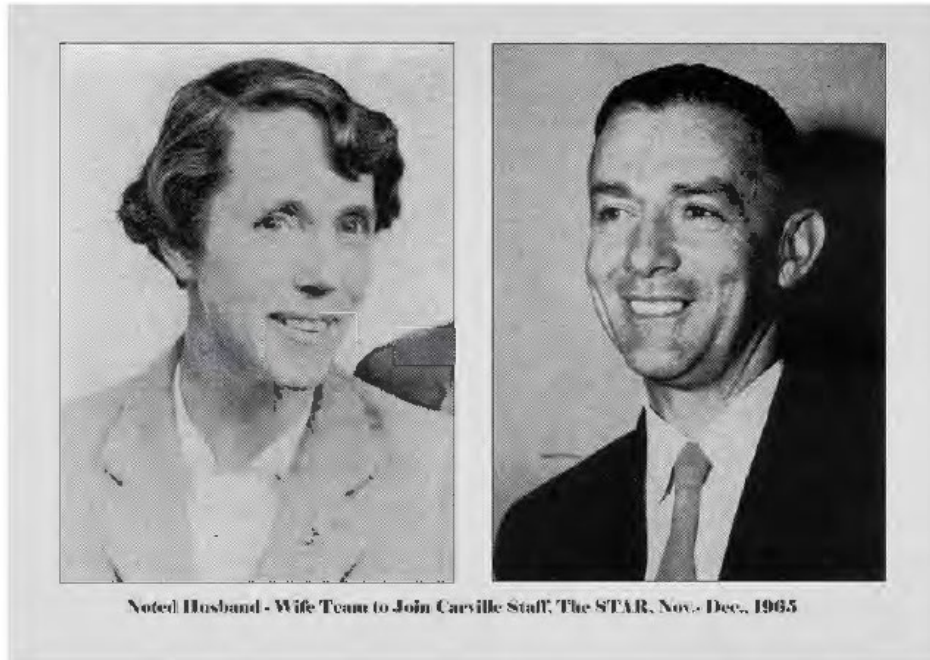
# Veterans



Patients of the hospital's American Legion Post marching on Memorial Day, c. 1950.

The American Legion formed a post at the hospital in the early 1930s. Patient veterans took an active part in lobbying congress for hospital improvements. The 40 and 8, an independent fraternal organization of U.S. veterans, took up the cause of the patient newspaper "The STAR".

# Rehabilitation



Ors. Paul and Margaret Brand arrived at Carville in the 1960s and established the first Rehabilitation-Research Program for H.D. patients. Their work led to new techniques in reconstructive surgery, repetitive pressure studies and advancements in the care of the eye that improved the health and welfare of H.D. patients worldwide.

# Research

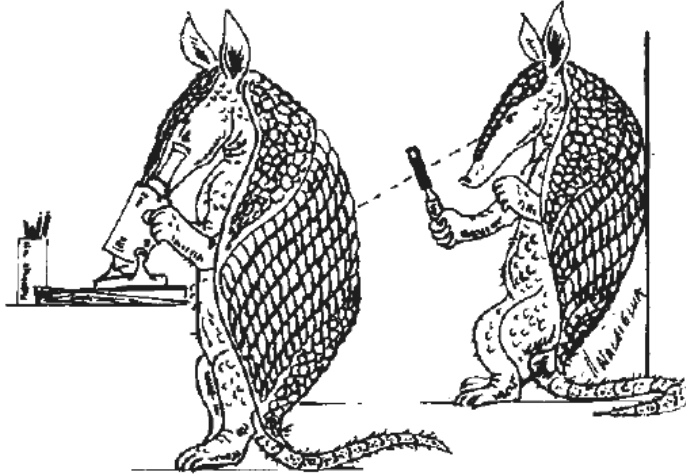


Illustration by STAR staff artist Henry Nalaeclua, 1970s.

The germ that causes Hansen's disease, *M. leprae*, cannot be cultured in the lab. Researchers looked for an animal that could be infected with *M. leprae* for decades. In 1971, the armadillo was successfully infected. Research continues at Louisiana State University with a focus on finding a vaccine.

# Treatment Today



Blister packs are distributed to patients around the world by the World Health Organization (W.H.O.).



Prednisone and Thalidomide are commonly used to treat immunological reactions that may damage the skin and nerves.



Dapsone, Rifampin and Clofazimine are the 3 most common drugs used to fight the leprosy infection.

Today, Hansen's disease is an outpatient disease. The most commonly used drugs in Hansen's disease treatment are Dapsone, Rifampin and Clofazimine. In most new cases, patients will take multi-drug therapy for 1-2 years. Outpatient clinics around the U.S. provide patients with medications and support.