Taking a Stand: Provident Hospital of Baltimore (1894-1986)  
*Founded By and For Baltimore's African Americans*

On June 13, 1894, Provident Hospital was established at 419 Orchard Street in northwest Baltimore. Founded by a small group of doctors, mostly African Americans, the modest ten bed facility provided quality healthcare at a time when the admission of black patients to white hospitals was restricted or prohibited. At that time, opportunities for training and employment for black medical practitioners were also limited. The Provident Training School for Nurses opened in 1896 in a building adjacent to the hospital's enlarged facility at its second address, 413 West Biddle Street; the Nursing School was transferred to Coppin State College in 1974.

In 1986, Provident merged with Lutheran Hospital of Maryland to become Liberty Health Center. Provident Hospital as an independent entity was no more. At the time of its demise it had become a fixture in Baltimore: a well respected, modern up to date facility with highly trained and skilled professionals and staff (a majority of whom were African American) serving the entire population primarily, providing quality care for thousands of hospital patients, and for the community at large through comprehensive outpatient services.

The Provident "history" series' records set aside for History Day competitors' research include minutes, annual and special reports, fund raising booklets, programs of events, numerous photographs, historical sketches and an historical chronology in narrative form by Sarah Davis Elias (see Additional Sources - Secondary, below). The Elias book, an important preliminary, secondary research source has been included in the collection and can be read on site; there is an additional office copy at the City Archives. There are two non circulating copies in Enoch Pratt Free Library Central as well. The Provident materials document the untiring efforts by the Baltimore African American community and local white supporters through the years to obtain and sustain quality and relevant health care for the under served black population and opportunities for African American medical professionals to learn and practice their craft.
National History Day (NHD) 2016-2017
Baltimore City Archives Topic #3

Note: The Provident Hospital Archives Collection is unique to the Baltimore City Archives and can be utilized on point, or as a springboard for focusing on similar efforts by black communities and their white supporters across America.

Research Resources

Baltimore City Archives:
Collection: BTR21 Provident Hospital Archives Collection (1896-ca.,1984)
   Status: Unprocessed; sorted by record type with online descriptive inventory.
   Series: "History" Box BTR21-97 (Sorted - folder list)
   Volume: 1 Records storage carton
   Date Range 1896-1984

Collection: MSA SC 5971 Provident Hospital (Baltimore) Photographs
   Status: 759 items with online descriptive inventory. Over six hundred images are available on the Baltimore City Archives Flickr site.

Additional Sources:
1. Primary:
   - The Baltimore Afro-American Ledger, The Baltimore Afro-American, The Baltimore Sun (and earlier editions), other contemporary Baltimore newspapers (from ca., 1894)
   - Local and national newspapers for the period are available to library card holders through the Enoch Pratt Free Library System: online at home, as well as in the central library and branches of the system. There is some availability at other Md. public library systems.
2. Secondary:

Internet:
   - Wikipedia: Provident Hospital (Baltimore) (as of February 2016)

Accessibility in the Baltimore City Archives:
Available documents: Key textual documents from BTR-21-97, the "History" series are pre-selected, duplicated and available in a binder for copying. However, the volume and types of records in the one records storage box require a relatively limited onsite research time commitment and as a whole are a substantive primary research source. A manageable number of photographs in MSA SC 5971 have been identified and are available in the original for viewing onsite and duplicating. Additional photographs contained in some of the textual materials are available for copying on site as well.

Recommended level for Student Competitors:
   - Junior and Senior High School.