

Background on Fitzsimons Army Hospital

In 1918 Army Hospital No. 21 was created near Aurora at Peoria Street and East Colfax Avenue. The site used to be a nursery where plants and trees grew. The nursery closed and the Army leased land for a new hospital for \$1 per year. This army hospital was used primarily to treat patients with tuberculosis, Spanish Flu or other lung diseases; many soldiers from World War I recovered here. Many of these soldiers came with orders from their doctors to rest and recuperate in the Colorado sun and dry air.

The Educational Department made school, work and business training available to patients. A nine-hole golf course, baseball diamond and tennis courts gave patients a place to relax. The hospital became a permanent army post in 1920. The name changed to Fitzsimons General Hospital in honor of William Thomas Fitzsimons, the first United States Army officer to be killed in WWI.

The U.S. Government expanded and upgraded the hospital facilities in 1941 and built Building 500. It opened just in time to care for the servicemen wounded at Pearl Harbor. The hospital closed in 1999, but Building 500 and a few other Army buildings are now part of the Anschutz Medical Campus.

Note: One of the photos is of chest surgery, nothing is visible except the operating room and the doctors and nurses, but you many want to warn students or not use the photo.



GENERAL ORDERS)
NO. 40)

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, June 26, 1920.

Section

Classification, designation, and names of military hospitals ----- II

II. Classification, designation, and names of military hospitals.--Pending the general revision of Army Regulations and Manual for the Medical Department, now under way, the following changes are announced in advance for the information and guidance of all concerned:

14. In consonance with the above and effective July 1, 1920--

e. General Hospital No. 21, at Denver, Colo., is announced and will be known as the "Fitzsimons General Hospital, Denver, Colo.," in honor of First Lieut. William Thomas Fitzsimons, Medical Officers' Reserve Corps, United States Army (born, 1859; died, 1917), killed surgeon and the first officer of the United States Army killed in the World War. He met his death at Dannes-Camiers, France, September 4, 1917, in an air raid by the enemy while serving with Base Hospital No. 5, United States Army. The name also fittingly commemorates the eminent services rendered by the civil medical profession of America as members of the Medical Corps of the Army during the World War.


16. All current regulations in conflict with the foregoing are rescinded.
(322.3 A. G. O.)

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

W. M. WRIGHT,
Major General, Acting Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:
P. C. HARRIS,
The Adjutant General

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:


JAMES H. BENNER
Captain, MSC
Adjutant

Policy File

General Orders (naming Fitzsimons) 6/26/1920, city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collections. Fitzsimons box 1, folder 3



Aurora History Museum • 15051 E. Alameda Pkwy, Aurora, 80012 • 303-739-6660

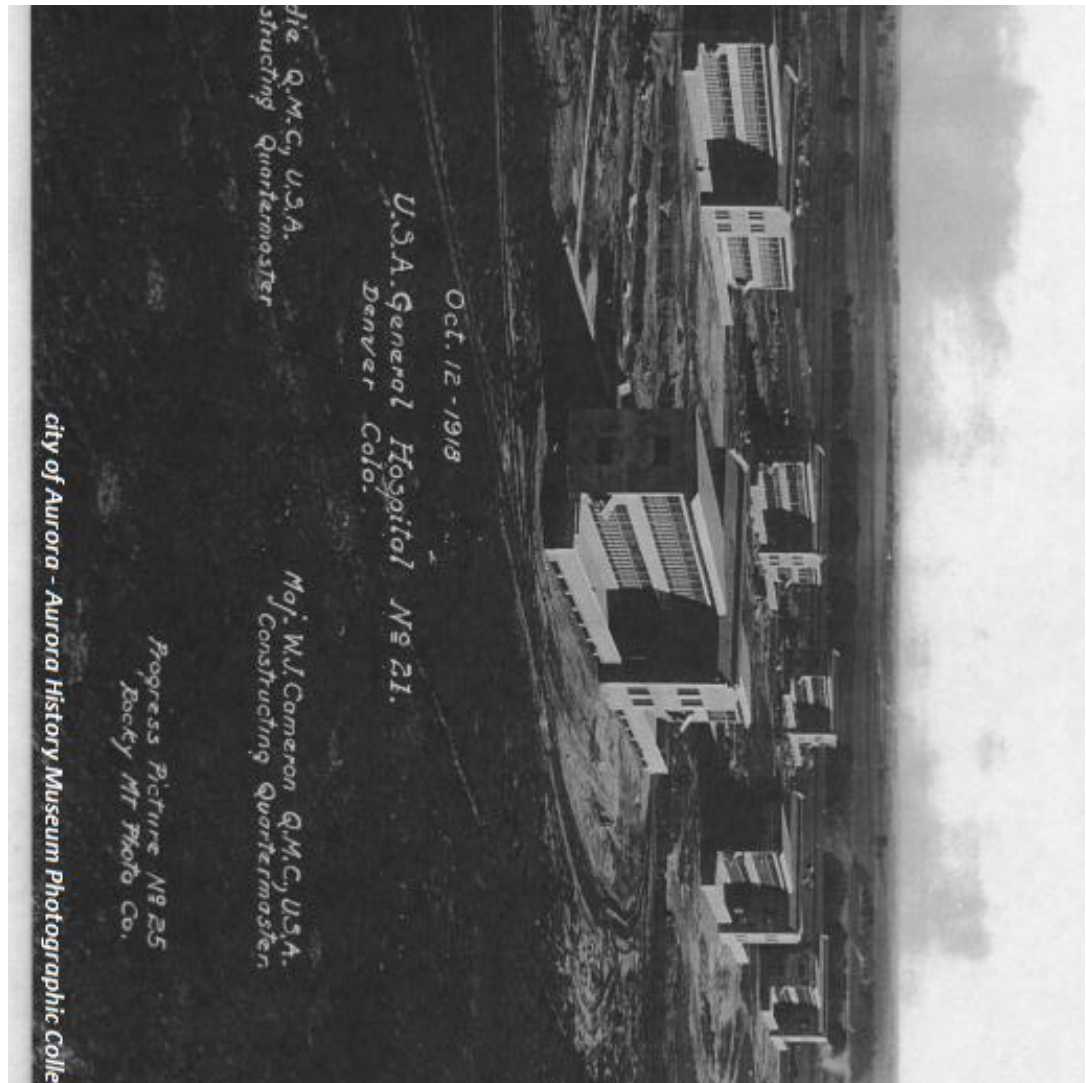


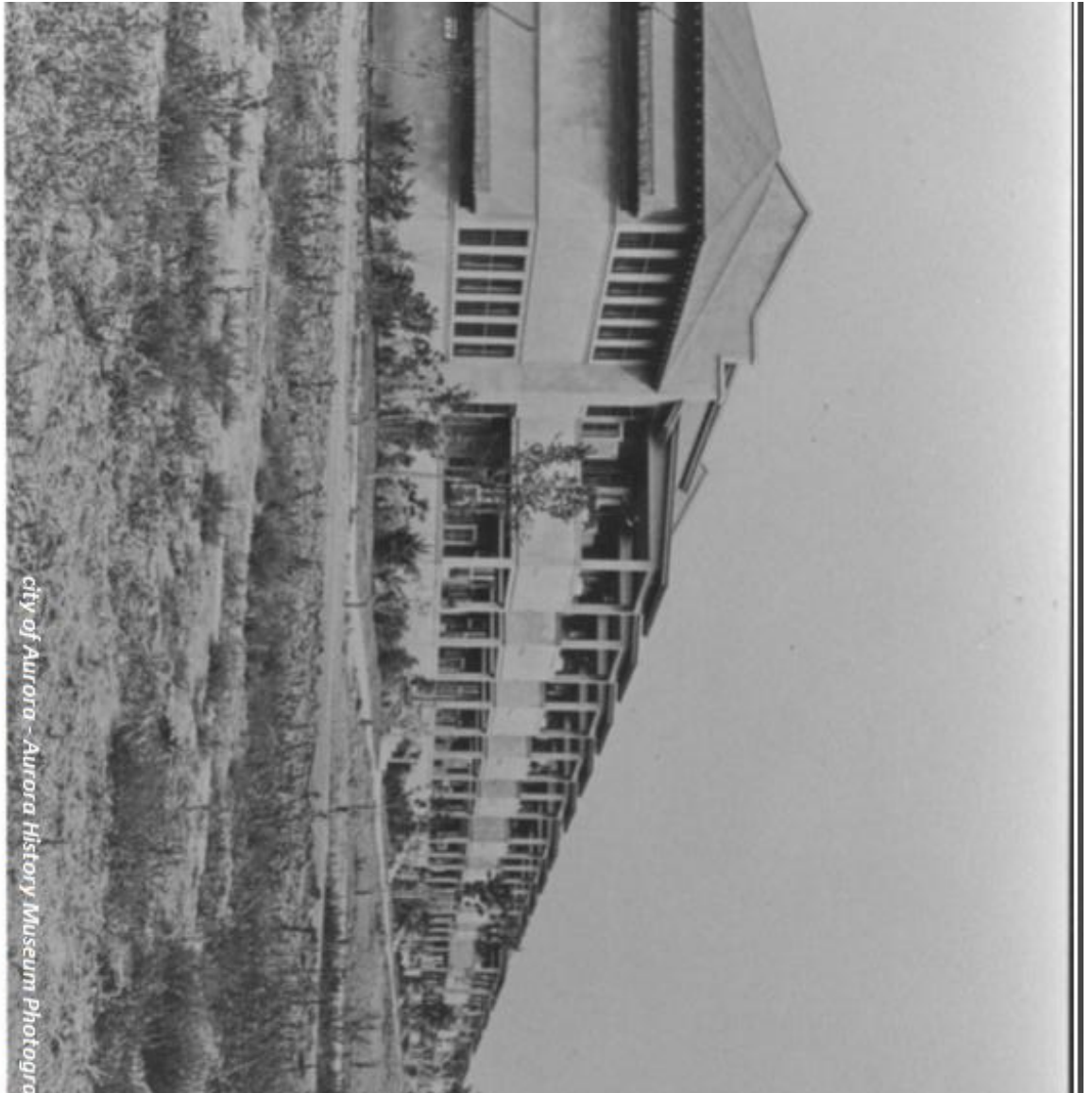
Photo USA General Hospital No. 21 10/12/1918, city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collections. Fitzsimons box 1, folder 2





Photo "Infirmary group Solarium", city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collections.
Fitzsimons box 1, folder 2





Balconies at Fitzsimons, city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum photography collection, p1996
13264.3





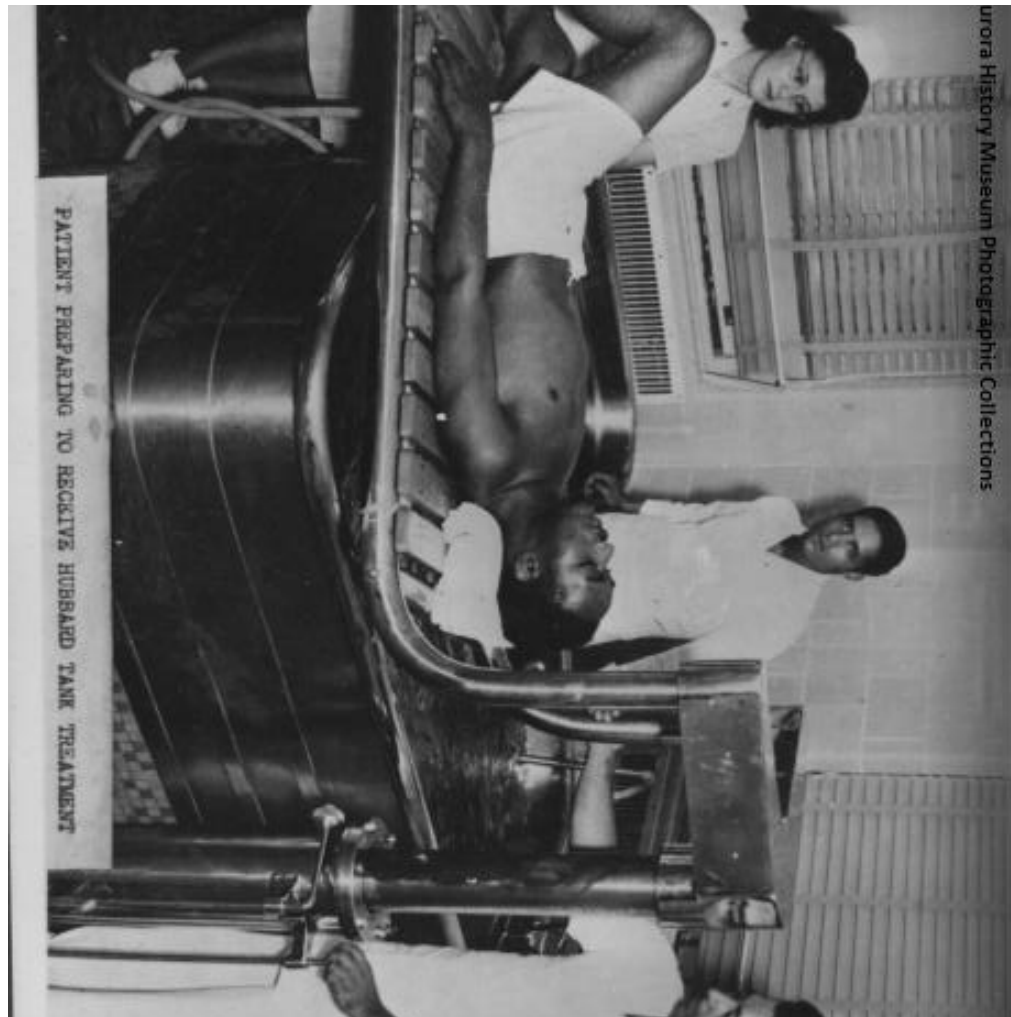
Chest Surgery, city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collections. Fitzsimons box 1, folder 6





Fitzsimons vs. Lowry Baseball game, city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collections.
Fitzsimons box 1, folder 6





Hubbard Tank Treatment, city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collections. Fitzsimons box 1, folder 6

A Hubbard tank is used to treat injuries like burns or to clean wounds, but is usually for physical therapy for people with bad joints



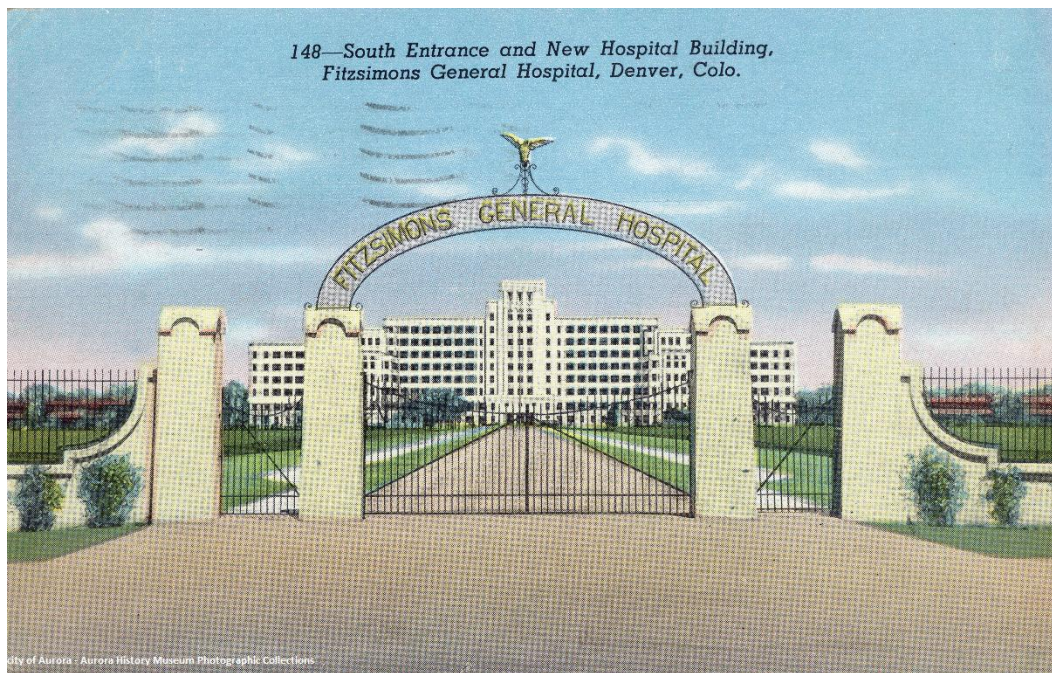


city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photograph

Fitzsimons Staff late 1910's- early 1920's, City of Aurora, Aurora History Museum photography collection, p2005 18259



Aurora History Museum • 15051 E. Alameda Pkwy, Aurora, 80012 • 303-739-6660



Postcard featuring south entrance of Fitzsimons General Hospital
P.1996.13303, city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Photography Collection



Aurora History Museum • 15051 E. Alameda Pkwy, Aurora, 80012 • 303-739-6660

Joseph Milton Hand Transcript

[Link to Interview](#) Part One, 10:07-11:40

Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, Veteran's History Project

Joseph Milton Hand:

So that was interesting. But then on the 31st of October they assigned me to Fitzsimons General Hospital, along with several others.

Michael Willie:

Okay.

Joseph Milton Hand:

So we caught a train for it to Denver, Colorado.

Michael Willie:

Okay.

Joseph Milton Hand:

And then I took that surgical technician course for two months.

Michael Willie:

Okay. Now, is this -- where is this being conducted? Is this at a university or is this --

Joseph Milton Hand:

No. It's an Army hospital.

Michael Willie:

Okay.



Joseph Milton Hand:

Fitzsimons General Hospital. And at that time the hospital was designated to handle TB [tuberculosis] cases.

Michael Willie:

Okay.

Joseph Milton Hand:

But we had instructors other than the ones that worked for the hospital. They brought in instructors to instruct us. We had surgical technicians, we had medical technicians, dental technicians, pharmacy, x-ray, lab. And then each one of them had their own classes and instructors.

Michael Willie:

Okay. So coming out of this class, what are you expect -- what kind of -- you're going to have knowledge. What are your capabilities going to be once you get out?

Joseph Milton Hand:

Okay. A surgical technician assists in operations in the operating room.

Michael Willie:

Okay.

Joseph Milton Hand:

And then treating all surgical patients. So that's -- so I was assigned then to a station hospital in New Orleans.

