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ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL BUTTON

by Joy Journey

Jim Nolan shared this uniform button from St. Luke's Hospital, and the hunt was on to find its history. The button is a Division I brass button, with a winged ox, symbol of the apostle Saint Luke. At first glance the button appears to depict Pegasus, but note the ox tail and horns on the head turned towards the viewer.

There are many St. Luke's Hospitals in the US and around the world. At the end of the 1800s, a directory of hospitals in the US was published, which included the doctors, number of beds, and even the mortality rate (some of which were SCARY). In Jacksonville FL, was St. Luke's Hospital and Casket Factory—once you check in, they are fully prepared if you check out!

St. Luke's Hospital had 55 beds, two staff, 20 students, served 1200 patients a year, and had a mortality rate of 6.1%—which was a pretty good rate at the time the directory was created. By 1912 the hospital had expanded to 125 beds with the addition of a brick building for public wards and the nurses' home (see postcard below).

