



BC History of Nursing Society

# NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2020  
VOLUME 31  
ISSUE 2

## Early Years of Ladysmith General Hospital School of Nursing

### Grace Frances Woodward and Ladysmith's First Graduates

By Irene Goldstone

The first matrons and graduates of the early BC hospitals were major agents of change who altered the social fabric of the province's history - but their stories are rarely told and have largely disappeared. In researching the Ladysmith General Hospital for a project on early BC hospital schools of nursing, I was fortunate to find threads of the lives of the first matron, Grace Frances Woodward, and the first three graduates that illustrate this point.

Nanaimo, Duncan, Ladysmith, and Chemainus were neighbouring resource-based communities established during the last half of the 19th century on the traditional territory of the Stz'uminus (Chemainus), a band of the Coast Salish Peoples. Ladysmith was envisioned as a model company town by coal baron James Dunsmuir. To create the town, he forced the relocation of the miners and their families from the nearby community of Extension. With the rapid growth and further industrialization,

Ladysmith incorporated in 1904. The population grew to 5,000 by 1913<sup>1</sup>.

But mining was a dangerous enterprise. As one settler recalled, "In the early days we did not have a hospital. Injured men were brought home on a stretcher; the wives or mothers had to care for them, and, if they died, they prepared them for burial. It was sad."<sup>2</sup> At the same time, chronic respiratory diseases and infant (under 5 years) and maternal mortality rates, particularly among mining families, were extremely high, even for the time.<sup>3</sup>

Initially, injured men were transported to hospitals in nearby Nanaimo or Chemainus but, in part because of rough roads and distances, patients often died en route. As a result, the Ladysmith General Hospital board was formed in 1910.<sup>4</sup> After considerable fund raising, a large three-story frame hospital was built. Operating costs came from the town council for

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## newsletter committee

Lynne Esson (chair), Beth Fitzpatrick, Ethel Warbinek, Sheila Zerr, Naomi Miller, Glennis Zilm, Lenore Radom. The BC History of Nursing Society Newsletter is published 3 times per year.

### SUBMISSIONS ARE WELCOME.

Deadline for the Fall Issue is September 15, 2020.  
Please send submissions to: [esson1@shaw.ca](mailto:esson1@shaw.ca)



## Archival Corner

### Preserving and protecting 30 years of archival collections!

Thanks to the founding members and other interested nurses who had the energy and the vision to preserve the nursing history of BC by maintaining an archive of historical documents and records as well as a wonderful collection of artifacts!

Concerns raised at Board meetings throughout 2018 due to diminishing membership and people resources, resulted in the formation of a Succession Planning Task Group to find ways to preserve and protect the future of the BC History of Nursing Society's archives and artifacts. That Task has been accomplished!

Our society's 30 years collection of archival holdings, graduation pins and insignia will be transferred to UBC Library Rare Books and Special Collections (RBSC) this Spring. Krisztina Laszlo, Archivist, Rare Books and Special Collections, sees our records as particularly important for preserving the history of women and nursing in British Columbia. UBC Library RBSC is accessible one day a week to the public as well as by appointment for researchers.

As for our collection of artifacts, due to the wonderful support of Elizabeth Saewyc, Director of the School of Nursing, and collaboration with the School of Nursing, this collection will remain in storage at UBC-Vancouver School of Nursing with ownership of the artifacts retained by our society.

NAN MARTIN, Archives Chair



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

KATHY MURPHY

When you receive this newsletter, hopefully our global world will be returning to a life beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. The enforced isolation and cancellation of everything that was our "normal existence" has left us with a new appreciation of what is of value in our lives. For the first time, the Annual General Meeting was held through a telephone conference. The annual reports were pre-circulated so those attending were aware of the many activities carried throughout the year. These reports are included in this newsletter.

A new decade has begun with us looking forward to celebrating 30 years of collecting, storing appropriately, sharing, and displaying our treasured archives and artifacts. Although it is time for celebration, it is also time to consider the future of our group. With the successful arrangement for the transferring of our archives to the Rare Books Division of the UBC Library and arrangement for a home for our artifacts at the UBC School of Nursing, we still are in need of help to operate this society. Several of us really would like to retire and require assistance now to carry on. If you can help with archives work, the editing of the newsletter with the designer, help with preparing displays, identifying nurse leaders for nomination to provincial and national Memorial Books, working with the website, or other activities, please contact me through the website.

At the time of writing, it is not clear whether the June meeting will be in person or via Zoom. At this meeting, the future of the BC History of Nursing will be the main agenda item. The BCHNS website is revised regularly so it is worth checking it to keep track of our activities. Please go to [www.bcnursinghistory.ca](http://www.bcnursinghistory.ca). Articles can also be viewed on Facebook and Twitter accounts.

It is sincerely hoped that our ability to meet in person will occur as soon as the restrictions are removed. In the meantime, keep well and enjoy your "new normal".

Kathy



*Painting is from Ann Hilton, an artist with a focus on watercolour and lives in Vancouver, British Columbia in the Pacific Northwest of Canada.*

[www.annhilton.ca](http://www.annhilton.ca)

## EDITOR'S DESK

LYNNE ESSON

We are living in unprecedented and challenging times with much uncertainty as to what the future holds. This pandemic has rapidly changed the way we live our lives. This is a defining moment in our lived history and years from now historians will analyze and reflect on how this event in time and our response to it made a difference in our shared world view. Let us hope we will be judged kindly!

This summer edition contains our annual reports which provide information on the ongoing work of our Board of Directors and our Committees. Our feature article by Irene Goldstone looks at the Early Years of Ladysmith General Hospital School of Nursing. We have a superb collection of biographies, oral histories on BC nurses as well as artifacts. See our website: [www.bcnursinghistory.ca](http://www.bcnursinghistory.ca)

We will be taking a break for the summer and look forward to providing you with our news in the fall. As Dr. Bonnie Henry keeps telling us.....Be kind, be calm and above all else be safe! We will get through this together.

Lynne



the care of indigents, the Miners’ Accident and Burial Fund, Wellington Extension Accident and Burial Fund, Granby Medical Association, provincial grants, and the Ladies Hospital Auxiliary. From its inception, a subscription/hospital insurance scheme was established for non-mining families.<sup>5</sup>

Given that the hospital was a three-story building, the third floor likely was accommodation for nurses. The first patients were admitted in mid-June 1911. The official opening was presided over by the Honourable Dr H E Young, acting premier and minister of education, July 18, 1911. Although there had been some doubt about the need for a hospital in Ladysmith, by August the public ward was reported to be overcrowded.<sup>6</sup> During its early years, the hospital averaged 10 to 17 patients a day.

The first matron, Grace Frances Woodward,<sup>7</sup> took up her position June 12, 1911, but since March had collaborated with the Auxiliary in preparing for the opening. She worked closely with the Auxiliary throughout her tenure.

Grace Frances Woodward was born in England in 1871. She was one of nine children (three of whom died in childhood) and came to Canada in 1888 with her parents, Herbert Woodward, a sea captain, and Julia Ann Woodward, and siblings. Two sisters, Maude and Harriet settled at Burnaby Lake (present-day Burnaby) as postmistress and schoolteacher. Grace returned to England about 1891 and lived there until moving to the Bronx, New York, in 1900. We do not know how long she lived in the US before returning to Canada; she is not in the 1911 Canada Census. We have not been able to identify where she graduated as a nurse; she was not a graduate of any of the major BC schools of nursing. She may have trained in the UK or USA.

Under the hospital bylaws, she had the power, unusual at the time, to hire her own nursing staff. Miss Woodward brought with her Miss M A Ford, whom she knew in Vancouver but who was originally from Galt, Ontario. Miss Ford remained only until September 1911, when she left because of illness in her family. Miss Woodward enrolled the first students into the nursing school about this time.

Nora O’Connell was the first to graduate on January 14, 1914. The second and third graduates were Hanna (also Hannah) Wood Robertson and Sarah (also Sadie) Hanna Little in December 1914. The graduations were celebrated with fund-raising supper dances hosted by the Ladies Hospital Auxiliary.<sup>8</sup>

Nora O’Connell was born in Cork, Ireland and, at the age of 17 in 1908, immigrated to Canada with her parents and three siblings. She registered in 1919 with the Graduate Nurses Association of BC (#413) when it began offering registration. Following graduation she practised nursing in Victoria until her retirement in 1958 aged 66; she died in 1969.<sup>9</sup>

Hanna Wood Robertson, the daughter of a blacksmith, was born in 1893 in Wellington, BC. At the time of her marriage in 1919 to Horace Albert Moody, a musician, she was practicing nursing and living in Kamloops. Horace had served with the militia

on Vancouver Island and, during World War 1, in France with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. They had two sons. The family moved to San Diego sometime after 1921. Horace died there in 1966 and Hanna in 1982.<sup>10</sup>

Sarah Hanna Little, the daughter of a coal miner, was born in 1890, also in Wellington, BC; the family moved to nearby Ladysmith in 1902. After graduation she remained on staff at the Ladysmith General Hospital. Two years after graduation, she married George Gold, a coal miner and organizer for the United Mine Workers of America, but remained on call at the hospital for pneumonia cases. The couple had one son. Sarah died in Ladysmith in 1959 and George died there in 1968.

Sarah Little’s graduation pin, incorporating 1910 for the founding of the hospital board, is on its obverse. Her graduation pin was donated to the Registered Nurses Association of BC’s 75th anniversary collection by her son, Thomas Gold and is now in the BC History of Nursing Society collection held by the University of BC Library Special Collections.<sup>11</sup>

The work of Grace Woodward and her nursing students took place in a difficult social and economic context. During the 32 years the Extension mines operated, 104 men were killed. Several accidents resulted in multiple deaths. For example, in October 1909, the collapse of a roof followed by an explosion killed 32 men of whom 30 were from Ladysmith. The miners’ strike of 1912-1914 is considered one of the bitterest and, at times, the most violent of strikes in Canadian history. The strike years were profoundly destructive to Ladysmith’s economy and social fabric. The striking miners and their families lost their company homes. In response to violence and demonstrations by the miners and their families, especially in Nanaimo and Ladysmith, militia from Victoria, renamed the Civil Aid Force, was called in and occupied the town in August 1913. Ultimately, the miners voted to return to work, with little gain, two weeks after World War 1 was declared August 4, 1914. Full production did not resume until 1916.<sup>12</sup>

Grace Woodward was highly esteemed as matron of Ladysmith General Hospital. She resigned first in November 1913, rescinded her resignation under pressure from the board but ultimately resigned in April 1914 and lived with her sisters in Burnaby Lake. In his tribute on her resignation, Dr R D Dier, president of the hospital board (and mayor), said:

*“On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Ladies Auxiliary of Ladysmith General Hospital we desire to express to you how deeply we regret parting ways with you as matron. The unique success which our hospital has had under most trying circumstances and conditions can only be explained in one way - viz - Through the marked ability of yourself and the constant and undivided attention you have given your work. The proportion of surgical cases which have met with success has been unusually large and it is quite evident that nothing but the enormous amount of self sacrifice and hard work which you have given could have brought about such results. Your accounts and reports have*



Photograph of Grace Woodward Zala as a British Red Cross Nurse during WW 1 is copyright by the Burnaby Archives (# 300-001) and is used with permission.



Graduation pin of Sadie Little (later Gold), photographs by A.W. Goldstone, 1987, used with permission of the author.

*always been ready, absolutely correct and models of neatness. Again expressing to you our deep regret at your departure from our midst and wishing you a long life of usefulness.*

The Board and Ladies Auxiliary presented her with several pieces of cut glass. Her church community, the Ladies Guild of St John's Anglican Church, marked her departure by presenting her with a glass vase.

At the age of 43, Grace married Victor Zala (age 28) on August 21, 1914 at Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria. Nora O'Connell was a witness. Grace and Victor likely met while Victor served with the Civil Aid Force the previous year. Both Zala's almost immediately volunteered for service in World War 1. From March 20, 1915 - May 5, 1918, Grace worked with the British Red Cross Society and the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem. The Ladysmith Chronicle reported that she was matron of one of the large hospitals in England where she was regarded as being especially efficient in surgical operations. Her Red Cross records show that she worked at Hanworth Park Hospital, (West London); Victor's military service record gives Tylney Hall Military Hospital, Winchfield, Hampshire as her address as his next of kin. Victor was wounded in France during the war.

After the war, Grace and Victor settled on Galiano Island in 1920 (population 300), where they are recalled as small-scale farmers; Grace was always seen wearing a hat and gloves. They had no children. Grace died in 1959 (age 88)

and Victor in 1966 (age 80); they are buried on Galiano. Their gravestone is engraved: Loves divine are loves excelling.

The early small hospital schools of nursing are all but forgotten as are the matrons and the early graduates. They are anonymous because their lives and their contributions to the health of British Columbians and society at large are unknown, much less celebrated. It is rare that there is enough information to piece together an outline of these nurses' lives. Clearly Grace Woodward was highly esteemed by the Hospital Board and her church community; she is remembered fondly by the elders of Galiano Island. She established a standard of care and an apprenticeship program in nursing creating an opportunity for employment for young women.

As Belshaw writes, "the adult British female immigrant to central Vancouver Island emerges as an agent of historical change in a male dominated industrial town."<sup>13</sup>

### Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Archivist Christine Meutzner and Volunteers of the Ladysmith and District Historical Society, especially Esther and John Sharp and Bridget Watson who assisted with the biographical details of Grace Woodward Zala and Victor Zala, Nora O'Connell, Sarah Hanna Little Gold, and Hanna Wood Robertson Moody. We greatly appreciate the many helpful and constructive suggestions from the Sharps who reviewed this manuscript.

Mary Corbett MA, MLIS, archival assistant, City of Burnaby, provided the photograph of Grace Woodward Zala as a British Red Cross nurse. Carol Robson, president of the Galiano Museum Society, provided personal remembrances about the Zalas’ life on the island and an image of their gravestone. Thanks also to Wayne O’Connell for additional biographical information about Nora O’Connell. I also greatly appreciate the editorial assistance of Glennis Zilm, with whom I am working on a History of Early BC Hospital Schools of Nursing, and of Lynne Esson and Anita Peterson of the BCHNS. Newsletter.

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#### Cover Photo

Ladysmith General Hospital, 1911, showing Dr Fowler, Dr Muller, Dr Ewing, Nora O’Connell, and Grace Woodward. The photograph (number 2007 034 2314) is copyright by the Ladysmith Historical Society Archives and is used with permission.

#### Author Note

*Irene Goldstone is a founding member of BCHNS and CAHN. She can be reached at [Irene.goldstone@gmail.com](mailto:Irene.goldstone@gmail.com).*

# POEM BY KITTY O’MEARA

And people stayed home  
And read books and listened  
And rested and exercised  
And made art and played  
And learned new ways of being  
And stopped  
And listened deeper  
Someone meditated  
Someone prayed  
Someone danced  
Someone met their shadow  
And people began to think differently  
And people healed.

# Canadian Personalities

## Nursing Sister Georgina Fane Pope (1862-1938)

from: [https://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/boer/georginapope\\_e.html](https://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/boer/georginapope_e.html)

Born in Charlottetown, Georgina Pope was the daughter of William Pope, a "Father of Confederation." A product of P.E.I. gentility, Georgina doubtless could have had a comfortable marriage and become an Island socialite. Instead, she attended the leading American school of nursing at Bellevue in New York. She remained in New York until October 1899, when she returned to Canada to seek a position as a nurse with the troops departing for South Africa.

Four nurses accompanied Canada's first contingent to South Africa and four more joined the second, all with the honorary rank of lieutenant. For five months after their arrival, the first group, with Georgina Pope as senior sister, served at British hospitals just north of Cape Town. Then, Nurse Pope and another sister proceeded north to Kroonstadt where, despite shortages in food and medical supplies, they took charge of the military hospital, successfully caring for 230 sufferers of enteric fever. In January 1902, Pope returned to South Africa a second time as senior sister in charge of a second group of eight Canadian nurses. Three other nurses among them were also returning for a second tour of duty. They served at a hospital in Natal until the end of the war in May.

In 1906, Nurse Pope began work as a member of the permanent Canadian Army Medical Corps at the Garrison Hospital in Halifax. Two years later, she attained the position of matron, the first in the history of the Canadian Army Medical Corps. Nurse Pope went overseas in 1917, but was invalided back to Canada at the end of 1918.

*On October 31, 1902, she became the first Canadian to receive the Royal Red Cross, awarded to her for meritorious and distinguished service in the field.*





# The Florence Nightingale We May Not Know

By ELIZABETH HANINK, RN, BSN, PHN

taken from: <https://www.workingnurse.com/articles/the-florence-nightingale-we-may-not-know>





## She was also a mathematician, hospital designer and social reformer who chastised the government for its India policy and convinced Queen Victoria to reform the military

Every nurse learns the basics about Florence Nightingale: She was a wealthy woman who, despite the gender strictures of her era, turned British healthcare on its head. Rather than leading a life of leisure (or, later, of invalidism), she threw her talents into reforming the world.

We all know that part of the story, but there are other facts about Nightingale that are less well-known. For example, she was multilingual, fluent in French, Italian, Latin and Greek. She was also a gifted mathematician. Before she became a nurse, she tutored in arithmetic, geometry and algebra. Throughout her life, she demonstrated all the marks of a serious mathematician: clear reasoning, an emphasis on basic principles and a healthy skepticism about assumptions.

### Running the Numbers

Nightingale took a particular interest in statistics, which she once described as “the measure of his [God’s] purpose.” In 1858, she became the first female fellow of the Royal Statistical Society, and in 1874, the American Statistical Association made her an honorary member.

Among her statistical accomplishments, Nightingale refined the polar-area diagram, a form of pie chart that illustrates values proportionally to the area of a wedge in a circular diagram. She believed this type of chart, which is still used in modern spreadsheet software, “affects thro’ the eyes what we fail to convey to the public through their word-proof ears.”

She used such a chart to illustrate the number of preventable non-combat deaths in the British military, an effort that was so effective it eventually convinced Queen Victoria to agree to reforms. Nightingale also formulated a model hospital statistical form and helped to pioneer the idea that researchers could objectively measure and analyze social forces.

Her studies showed the need for uniform metrics so that comparable data would in fact be comparable; in other words, so that 5 percent at St. Thomas Hospital meant the same thing as 5 percent measured at St. Isadora. In this way, Nightingale was able to see that the best-intentioned efforts can have unintended consequences — and that small changes can have a big impact.

### The Nightingale Ward

Hospital design was another of her passionate concerns. Nightingale saw four major problems with hospitals: crowding, sometimes to the extent of several patients having to share a bed; poor lighting; limited space; and inadequate ventilation. She saw the latter as particularly troubling because she (like many healthcare professionals of her time) believed that miasma — bad air — was a principal cause of disease.

Her pavilion plan (known as Nightingale wards) divided a larger hospital into self-contained individual units, none ever more than two to three stories high. Each unit was self-sufficient, helping to prevent the spread of disease with a central nursing station that allowed monitoring all patients at all times.

Her design located service areas at each end of the units, which

ideally had windows on three sides. Patients were positioned so that their heads came up against the wall with their feet facing a wide passageway. All this was to enhance ventilation; in her book *Notes on Hospitals*, Nightingale called depriving patients of proper ventilation “manslaughter under the garb of benevolence!”

Nightingale wards remained in use well into the late 20th century. Strangely, despite her interest in hospital design, Nightingale was firmly opposed to hospitals as a concept, saying that they belonged to a stage of imperfect civilization, or rather of non-civilization. Nightingale wards remained in use well into the late 20th century.

Strangely, despite her interest in hospital design, Nightingale was firmly opposed to hospitals as a concept, saying that they belonged to a stage of imperfect civilization, or rather of non-civilization. She once wrote that she looked forward to a time without hospitals. “But it is no use to worry about the year 2000!” she conceded.

Interestingly, only late in life did Nightingale acknowledge microbe theory, and then just barely. Many of her admonitions had the practical effect of fighting germs, but even in old age, she remained convinced that miasma was the chief culprit of disease.

### The Great Reformer

Although she authored about 200 publications and several books, Nightingale, in keeping with Victorian sensibilities, made neither public appearances nor public statements. Even so, she was a prolific activist and, despite lacking the right to vote, became a political force, chastising her government for the periodic famines that claimed the lives of 29 million people during British colonial rule of India.

Although her own broad education enhanced her problem-solving ability, she resisted educational requirements and even registration for nurses. She thought that good candidates would be lost if qualifications were determined by formal testing. Nurses, she held, should come from all levels of society.

Nightingale believed that character and experience counted more than exams. Despite the rampant institutional sexism of the time, she also strenuously resisted efforts to make nursing subservient in any area, especially to male-dominated medicine. Nightingale believed that character and experience counted more than exams.

Throughout her later life, Nightingale labored mostly behind the scenes — often working from bed as she struggled with illnesses that modern researchers now believe were due to brucellosis and spondylitis. Even so, when she died in 1910 at the age of 90, blind and bedridden, she left a legacy of work not yet rivaled.

*Elizabeth Hanink, RN, BSN, PHN, is a Working Nurse staff writer with extensive hospital and community-based nursing experience.*



# B.C. History of Nursing Society 2019 Annual Reports

The following reports were presented at the Annual Meeting on April 07, 2020. Due to space restrictions, some reports may have been edited. If you wish to see the entire report, please contact us or the committee chair.

## 01. President's Report – by: Kathy Murphy, President

In the last thirty years this committed group has experienced many changes. This year we add another as we meet by teleconference due to the pandemic COVID-19 coronavirus which has restricted our gathering face to face. It is hoped that the members will take this opportunity to read the distributed annual reports of the Committee Chairs and take part in the meeting if able.

The Board of Directors has met five times since the last Annual General Meeting. The regular activities of the society have continued and the board members have also dealt with other issues. These included:

- Acting on the tasks identified at the October 2019 Planning Session.
- Completing revisions to the Bylaws, to meet the Canada Revenue Agency additional criteria, which were approved in December by the CRA.
- Considering an appropriate method to display the collection of Nursing pins in the Artifact collection.
- Committing funding towards the annual Nursing Symposium to be held in April 2020 recognizing the history of nursing uniforms and the 30th Anniversary of the BC History of Nursing Society.

On March 12, 2020, a letter was sent to all current and recent members of the BC History of Nursing regarding the Nursing Symposium, the Annual General Meeting and the need to consider the dissolution of the Society. Due to the pandemic, this discussion will need to be considered when it is safe to do so.

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Shirley Ridalls in September after a long and rewarding life of service to many. Shirley was an active member of our group and worked tirelessly to ensure that we were aware of the many contributions of military nurses.

The World Health Organization proclaimed 2020 the Year of the Nurse and Midwife to recognize the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. As the world deals with this current health crisis, one must remember that the principles she taught are still so important.

Once again, I offer sincere appreciation to all who carry out the work of this significant organization and wish that more volunteers would come forward.

## 02. Treasurer's Report – by: Suzanne Forshaw, Treasurer

**The financial status of the History of Nursing is very stable.**

- The membership went down in 2019 (58 - 49) from 2018.
- The donations went up approximately \$148.69 from 2018.

**The following activities are complete or will be before the end May:**

- 2019 BCHoN Income Tax
- 2019 BCHoN Financial Statement
- 2019 financial review done by Wendy Orvig (paid consultant)
- 2019 T4A tax forms filed with the CRA before the end of May.

- The bank account was \$3401.65 as of the end of December 2019.
- The investment total was \$95,914.51 as of the end of December 2019.

The 2019 budget has been approved by the Board of Directors and will be presented for information at the Annual General Meeting

### 03. Archives – by: Nan Martin, Chair

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**Members:** Francis Mansbridge (Archivist), Sally MacLean (Oral Histories), Jennifer Stephens (Biographies), Nan Martin (Chair).

**In the spirit of the challenge to conduct regular business due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, this is a concise report.**

- The Succession Planning Task Group (Geertje Boschma, Francis Mansbridge, Ethel Warbinek, Glennis Zilm and I) accomplished its task to find ways to preserve and protect the future of the BC History of Nursing Society's archives and artifacts:
- Our society's 30 years collection of archival holdings, graduation pins and insignia will be transferred to UBC Library Rare Books and Special Collections (RBSC) this Spring. Krisztina Laszlo, Archivist, Rare Books and Special Collections, sees our records as particularly important for preserving the history of women and nursing in British Columbia. UBC Library RBSC is accessible one day a week to the public as well as by appointment for researchers.
- As for our collection of artifacts, due to the wonderful support of Elizabeth Saewyc, Director of the School of Nursing, and collaboration with the School of Nursing, this collection will remain in storage at UBC-Vancouver School of Nursing with ownership of the artifacts retained by our society.
- Our archival holdings are in excellent shape due to the very capable hands of our Archivist, Francis, who has also completed all the packing of these materials in readiness for transfer to UBC Library RBSC.
- Biographies: Jennifer presented her proposal "A Fresh Start" to the archives committee on February 6, 2020. The proposal was then shared with our members at the February 10th BOD meeting for review in March. Decision was made to await discussion until Jennifer presents proposal in person.
- Oral Histories: Sally completed the process and now over 100 cassettes are on MP3 format. Krisztina will take all oral histories to RBSC.

### 04. NEWSLETTERS – by: Lynne Esson, Chair

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**Committee:** Lynne Esson (chair) Beth Fitzpatrick, Ethel Warbinek, Naomi Miller, Sheila Zerr, Lenore Radom and Glennis Zilm

**Meetings:** At the call of the chairperson, no meetings held all communication was by email.

**Committee Activities:**

Three full issues of the history of nursing newsletter were published in 2019. All issues were guided by Anita Petersen's design and graphics. We thank Sue Forshaw for her assistance with the membership list. Also thanks to Lenore Radom who works with the printer and facilitates the mailing of newsletters for those who do not have e-mail and Lynne Esson who sends out the newsletters electronically. I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all who contribute information and articles for the newsletter.

**Editors for 2019**

- Winter: Membership renewal/Presidents message mailed out by Lenore Radom
- Spring: Ethel Warbinek
- Summer: Lynne Esson
- Fall: Lynne Esson

Overall, the costs for the printing and mailing of the newsletter for 2019 is approximately \$600 dollars. Anita Petersen for the three newsletters receives an honorarium in total of \$600 dollars

**Future Plans:**

We will continue to issue 3 newsletters per year with the winter issue being replaced by a special membership mailing.

### 05. Pages of History – by: Sheila Zerr, Chair committee: Sheila Zerr (Chair), Lenore Radom

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Due to the passing of Sheila's husband, this report is respectfully submitted by Lenore Radom **Three pages of history were completed & added to the website in 2019**

- Barbara Owen 1929 -2016 from Victoria
- Priscilla Lockwood living in Nanaimo
- Lynette Best living in Vancouver.

We are waiting for consent & a biographical file for Maxine Bredt who you may have noticed was the poster girl for Veterans Week representing the Italian Campaign 75 years ago.

We have the consent & information now to complete a page for Shirley Ridalls in time for the next newsletter.

There are a total of 80 pages of history in hardcopy only and 20 additional pages of history on the website. All new pages of history go on the website. If you would like to honour anyone or yourself with a page of history you will find the Form on the website. Consent for being public on the website must be signed & \$50 for sponsoring included with submission. Please contact Sheila if interested in honouring anyone this way.



## 06. PROGRAM – by: Lenore Radom

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My part for Nursing History Symposium 2020 was the preparation & organizing for the Fashion Show “A Costume Parade” describing the Cultural History of Nurses. The Script is ready, Models & Costumes organized and all is “On Hold” until the Protocols during the COVID 19 pandemic have been lifted. Feels good to be ‘ready’ though!!

## 07. Membership – by: Suzanne Forshaw

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The membership went down from 2018.

### IN 2018 THERE WERE:

Full Members:	38
Affiliate Members:	8
Student Members:	5
Honorary Members:	7
<b>Total:</b>	<b>58</b>

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*No one died in 2018*

### IN 2019 THERE WERE:

Full Members:	33
Affiliate Members:	5
Student Members:	4
Honorary Members:	7
<b>Total :</b>	<b>49</b>

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*Shirley Ridalls died this year*

## 08. Website – by: Lenore Radom, Chair

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**Committee:** Lenore Radom (chair), Beth Fitzpatrick, Jennifer Stephens, Margaret Scaia.

Jennifer Stephens reports that Our FaceBook has had increasing participation. Currently 151 followers. Twitter 306 followers. This is all good. I appreciate when people send me things or share posts on the sites ... this helps me keep things updated.

Margaret Scaia was busy finding 7 new monuments that we have added to the New Document “Monuments Honouring Nurses in BC” [not just Vancouver] To view on website go to Online Exhibits & under Nurse Presentations..scroll down to “Monuments Honouring Nurses in BC” click on blue tab & there you have it!. Again, Margaret invites you to keep your eye out for any such recognition of nurses in your area and to let her know if you have one to submit .

Beth Fitzpatrick & myself have been busy throughout the year keeping the website up to date, in all areas, but especially the Blog & Events. Anything submitted from Archives we add ASAP. This year we updated ‘death dates’ on all the biographical files that Sally McLean could find. If you have knowledge of a date missing, please notify us with confirmed information so we can keep our records as complete as possible

The 2019 newsletters have all been added. Also we have received invoice for biographical files being added to website for \$1081.50. Invoice sent to Treasurer.

We have dealt with several requests this year coming through “Contact Us”

## 09. Memorial Book – by: Lynne Esson, Chair

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During the year (2019), the History of Nursing Society did not submit any nominations to the **Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of British Columbia Memorial Book**. There were no nominations for the **CNA Memorial book**.

Nominated individuals will be recognized during the Awards Ceremony and will be entered into the book.

- There were no 2019 nominees for the NNPBC (Formerly the ARNBC) Memorial Book
- This year (2019) there were No nominees for the CNA Memorial Book
- If you know of or hear of someone who should be nominated please let the Chair of the Committee know.

## 10. Displays - by: Linda Quiney, Chair

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*Members: Linda Quiney (chair), Nan Martin, Geertje Boschma and Francis Mansbridge*

There have been two display installations in the UBC Nursing School since September 2019. The first was themed: "Then and Now". In November 2019, a temporary display of poppies was added to the case, and a poster featuring Royal Army Medical Corps Nursing Sister, Lieutenant Maxine Llewelyn Bredt was installed on the wall above the display case. A small wreath was also temporarily added to the doll cabinet next to the Nightingale doll. The display cabinet was changed in mid January 2020, to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the BCHNS, including documents from the founding meeting, and photos of the original members, as well as artifacts from the BCHNS collection.

A new display was being planned for May 12, 2020, to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birthday of Florence Nightingale, and International Nurses Day. At present, in the wake of the Covid-19 restrictions, it is unclear when this planning can proceed. A display celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the BCHNS was also be-

ing planned for the Atrium of Cecil Green Park House on the day of the Symposium. With the postponement of the Symposium it is expected that this will go forward as planned once the new date is determined.

In expectation of an off-site display, a wagon was purchased from Canadian Tire, to assist with the transport of materials. The wagon will be delivered to the BCHNS storage closet in the Nursing School once the restrictions are lifted.

Proposal: Given the heroic efforts of BC nurses in the current crisis, I believe we should consider some form of suitable display recognizing their incredible work during this period. A special display in the Nursing School will be certainly be possible, but a more public display on the campus should also be given consideration if a suitable site can be secured.

My sincere thanks to Nan Martin and Geertje Boschma for their invaluable help with ideas and installations as I wade through this first (eventful) year as Displays Chair.

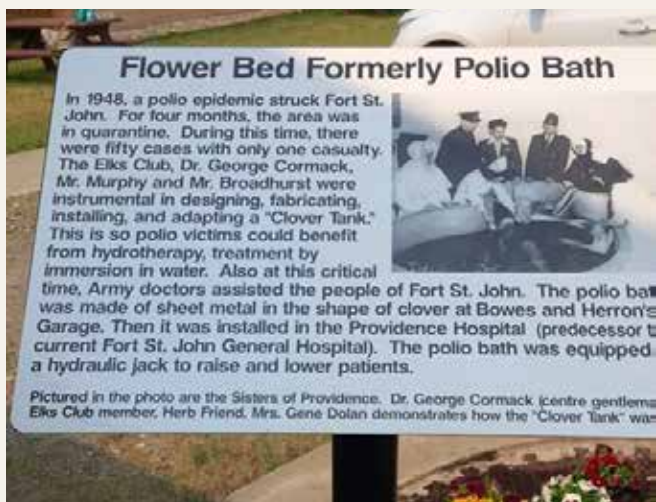
## 11. Friendship – by: Sheila Oxholm

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- I have continued, as necessary, to send cards and flowers to the membership throughout the year.
- I have visited two of our members in Assisted Living taking cards and flowers.
- I will be sending Easter cards to Honorary Life Members and Board members.
- Please let me know if there is any member whom I should contact either by mail, email or telephone during this difficult time

# Polio in Fort St. John, B.C.

Information provided by Tamara Secrist, Volunteer, Fort St. John North Peace Museum Archives



*Black and white photograph of a group of eight people beside the Elk's shamrock pool during the Polio epidemic in 1947.  
Photo By FORT ST. JOHN NORTH PEACE MUSEUM / 1986.150.02*

When the polio epidemic first struck Fort St. John in 1948, some 50 patients were treated. The only polio patient lost at that time was the brother of Sister Marcellina. The Elks club aided Dr. Cormack and Mr. Murphy, the Providence Hospital handyman, to improvise a "Clover Tank" for hydrotherapy for the polio patients. The army doctors assisted the local doctors at this crucial time and a hydraulic jack was improvised to raise and lower patients into and out of the water.

This clover leaf shaped bathtub is now used for a flower bed near the entrance to the Fort St. John North Peace Museum. It is planted with lovely flowers every year and is possibly visited by some local pioneer that knew or was related to someone that benefited from it during the epidemic.

## Emily Eliza Edwardes

By Ron Hyde ( Published in the Scrivener Volume 28 number 3 Fall 2019)



Emily Eliza Edwardes was a 1902 graduate of the Vancouver General Hospital. She served as a nursing sister in England during World War 1 and was mentioned in dispatches for her services. Prior to her marriage in 1920, she had her own business as a nurse therapist.

Following her marriage to Major Matthews, she assisted and supported him in collecting, cataloguing and preserving Vancouver documents, memorabilia and artifacts of Vancouver, the start of the City's Archival Collection.

After a battle with breast cancer, Emily Matthews passed away in 1948 at ages 73. Major Matthews designed and commissioned a stained glass window in her memory for Christ Church Cathedral, where her funeral took place. The Nurse Window completed in 1950 stands as a tribute to nursing in Vancouver and a vibrant memorial to Emily's passion for caregiving. Matthews design shows the top of the window with the crest of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps. At the bottom left is the family crest of Major Matthews and at the bottom right is the crest of the Vancouver General Hospital.

The City of Vancouver Archives acknowledges Emily as a co-founder and features a large bronze bust in her image, along with her husband. This 21 inch bronze head of Nursing Sister Emily Eliza Edwardes Matthews, by British Sculptor Sydney March, honours her as a co-founder with her husband Major James S Matthew of the City Archives of Vancouver



*photo from:  
[www.glassincanada.org/our-archives/28-17/](http://www.glassincanada.org/our-archives/28-17/)*



By KATHY MURPHY  
with editorial assistance from GLENNIS ZILM

**Service on the Skeena**  
**Horace Wrinch, Frontier Physician**  
By: Geoff Mynett  
Ronsdale Press: \$21.95

The biography of this amazing pioneer in the history of northern British Columbia commences in 1880 when, at age 14, he travelled alone from England to Quebec to join other members of his family. On the family farm he developed many skills that were certainly put to good use when he and his new bride arrived in Hazelton in 1900. Educated to be a missionary as well as a physician and surgeon, he became the first doctor in the area and set about building the first hospital in 1904. One incident described a patient arriving for help and found the doctor hammering the roof on the hospital.

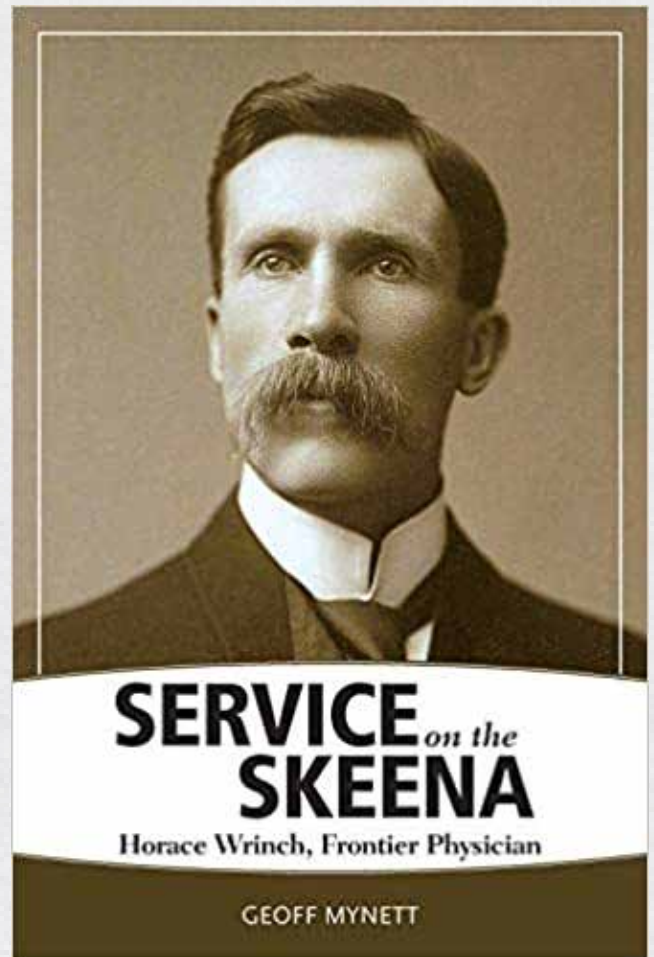
For the next thirty-two years, Dr. Wrinch was a highly respected doctor, surgeon, hospital administrator, medical missionary, Methodist Minister, magistrate, farmer, community leader and progressive politician. He was constantly introducing progressive ideas such as planting a vegetable and fruit garden at the hospital to provide food for the patients and staff, starting a small school of nursing to prepare nurses from the area, introducing a form of hospital insurance for the community in 1907, and involving the community in funding-raising events for the hospital to augment the grants provided by the national Methodist church.

During the Spanish flu, he utilized the few resources he had to separate the sick and care for them in the hotel and railway cars on a siding. His concern for the members of the Gitxcan and Wet'swete'en people was described in several incidents.

In the 1920's he was a President of the newly established British Columbia Hospital Association and also was the Skeena riding Liberal Member of the Legislature for two terms.

When alive, Dr. Wrinch would not allow the hospital to be named in his honour, but since his death in 1939, the hospital became the Wrinch Memorial Hospital to honour "the best known and most beloved man in Northern British Columbia".

To aid the reader, the author has included 50 maps and photos which add to this interesting biography. It is obvious that a great deal of research was used to augment the history of this man and his family. As the author is married to Dr. Wrinch's granddaughter, Alice, it is a wonderful tribute to her famous grandfather. As Dr. Wrinch was strongly supportive of nurses, early nursing education and nursing, I strongly recommend this well-written biography.



*"I strongly  
recommend this  
well-written  
biography."*

## Shirley Emmeline Rea Ridalls February 1, 1931 - September 26, 2019



Shirley was born in Dundurn Saskatchewan. During her childhood she made several moves throughout Saskatchewan and to other parts of Canada. Watching her mother take care of family, friends and animals, sparked her interest in nursing. She entered the Calgary General Hospital School of Nursing and graduated in 1954. After working at the Calgary General Hospital for six months, she moved to the Provincial Mental Hospital in Ponoka to do a post-basic diploma in Psychiatric Nursing. Shirley joined the Royal Canadian Medical Corp in 1956 as a reserve nursing

In 1960 Shirley moved to British Columbia to take a position at the Chilliwack General Hospital. Next she moved to the Maple Ridge General Hospital. She bought a small acreage in Maple Ridge and was very happy to be able to grow things and raise animals. She then moved to the Vancouver General Hospital and to the Burnaby General Hospital. After retiring from the Burnaby General Hospital she pursued her lifelong interest in gardening and returned to school where she attended Kwantlen College and completed her degree in Horticulture.

Shirley was very active in the Military Nursing Sisters Association, also, an active member of the British Columbia History of Nursing Society. She was always willing to attend Nursing Association gatherings where she would man a display table to promote the work of the Nursing Sisters Association and distribute material describing military nursing activities. She loved the Army Mess Dinners in Vancouver and retired at the rank of Captain, after 25 years of service. Shirley was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal by Lieutenant Governor David Lam for her service as a nurse to the Army, and Nursing Sisters.

Shirley joined the All Saints Anglican Church, making many new friends. She facilitated the organization of a senior's Yoga class. This class still meets in the Church basement. The class is named Shirley's Yoga Class to recognize her part in the formation of the class and to honour her memory.

sister. Shirley served with Reserve Field Ambulances #22, #24 and #12 medical companies. Reserves are part time soldiers who are trained to live under "field" conditions, her job was to train medical assistants to provide care to wounded and sick soldiers. She worked two days a week until compulsory retirement at age 47, but continued to volunteer at the #12 Medical Co. Museum.

## BURSARY AWARD

**The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the first award for 2020 has been given to Hrag (David) Yacoubian, a Phd student in the UBC School of Nursing.** The award will be used to complete pertinent research regarding his project "A History of Nursing and Humanitarianism in the Near East, 1890 -1930".

This project builds upon his master's thesis, entitled "North American Nurses' Transnational Relief Efforts during the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923".

He will question whether the works of the Near East Relief and American Red Cross, including those of nurses who cared for the victims and refugees of Humanitarian disasters in the Near East between 1890 and 1930, had the characteristics of modern humanitarianism tied to the promotion of human rights.

**Genelle Leifso** continues to work globally with some innovative projects. A year ago she helped facilitate a workshop in Jerusalem to prepare health workers in Israel on the management of the injured in the event of a disaster outside the hospital setting, in the absence of advanced medical equipment, water and electricity. The original program was with Magen David Adom (the Israeli Red Cross) and now teams of this group and experienced nurses have trained dozens of senior nurses from 12 hospitals around Israel. Those who completed the training will continue to train other medical and administrative staff in their hospitals with the cooperation of the Israel Ministry of Health and the MDA. Genelle understands that this is the first program of its kind in the world.

Last July, the Canadian Red Cross sent her to Syria to work for five weeks as an Operating Theatre Nurse in the Field Hospital attached to the Al Hol Refugee Camp in north eastern Syria. Most of the surgical patients were being treated for septic war wounds. It was a complicated operation in a politically unsettled region.

When home, Genelle continues to work casual in the Chilliwack General Operating Room, and she is supposed to be “retired”.

**Lydia Wytenbroek**, who received her PhD last year, has been honoured by The American Association for the History of Nursing with its Teresa E. Christy Award for her dissertation, “American Mission Nursing in Iran, 1907-1947: Faith, Gender and Profession.

*“As the Rice Interdisciplinary Postdoctoral Fellow, I had the opportunity to collaborate with scholars from different disciplines, discuss my research with nurse historians affiliated with the Bjoring Center, teach or co-teach six graduate courses, mentor graduate students and work on my research. A particularly fruitful conversation with Dr. Milani in the Department of Women, Gender and Sexuality led me to research and write an article about representations of nursing in Iranian Film. I was able to make a research trip to Pennsylvania where I met with a woman whose father had been a missionary surgeon in Iran. She had a collection of documents and photographs that I was able to use to expand on my dissertation research. Finally, I was able to work on my book proposal and receive feedback from nurse historians about the framing of this type of proposal and the submission process.”*

## Dr. Helen Mussallem's WW2 nursing uniform on display

Helen Mussallem is Canada's most decorated and beloved nursing leader who had a special place in her heart for the history of nursing. She is one of our esteemed Honourary Members and supported the BC History of Nursing Society since its inception.

Lynette Harper (Helen's niece) recently informed us that one of her aunt's WW2 nursing uniforms was on display at the Maple Ridge Museum and Community Archives.

The Museum's curator (Shea Henry) shared pictures of the displayed uniform and the accompanying mini biography.



Photo from: Maple Ridge Museum and Community Archives



By BETH FITZPATRICK

Wilson, Amy. (1965). When Days are Long: Nurse in the North. Halfmoon Bay BC: Caitlin Press. \$24.95 Paperback (ISBN: 9781773860084 / 1773860089) 176 pages.

BC History of Nursing members will be particularly interested in this memoir by a field nurse who worked in northern Canada during the 1950's. Amy V. Wilson RN was an intrepid and inspiring nurse who travelled the Alaska Highway by horse, car, dog team, snow shoes, airplane and boat and served Indigenous Peoples in their tents, shacks and on the trapline.

The book was originally released in 1965 titled No Man Stands Alone: the American release was called A Nurse in the Yukon. Amy's grandniece (Laurel Deedrick-Mayne, a noted Canadian author) was instrumental in the reissuing of the book in 2019 under its new title When Days are Long: Nurse in the North.

Amy Wilson was born in rural Alberta to a family that had come from Missouri enticed by the promise of free land. Her mother died when she was just three years old leaving her in the care of her father and 6 siblings. She finished high school and enrolled in a nursing program at Calgary General Hospital. After working in a hospital in an Alberta mining town and a stint as a public health nurse in the Peace River district, she was hired in 1949 by the Department of National Health and Welfare as a public health nurse for the Alaska Highway caring for 3,000 Indigenous People and covering 518 square kilometers.

Amy's readable memoir includes stories of the diphtheria epidemic and vaccination campaign, tuberculosis testing, treating outbreaks of influenza and measles, delivering babies and more. The thirteen chapters describe the physical hardships and logistical challenges she faced. Her memories of events and the people she met and cared for are told with charm, grace, humor, and compassion. She is a wonderful storyteller: she loved her work and the people that she cared for.

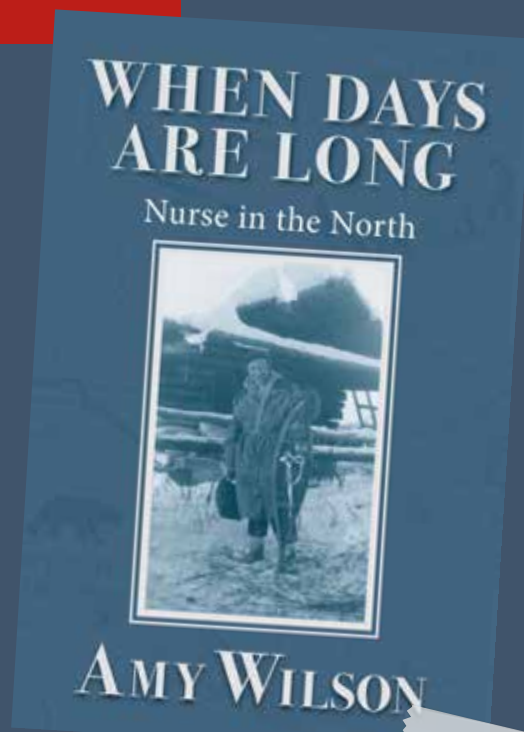
Amy Wilson's story is interesting from a nursing and sociological perspective. You will want to read this book!

*Picture Captions:*

*Amy Wilson with horse and sleigh*

*Amy Wilson travelling by dogsled*

*Amy Wilson makes a nursing visit to a trapper's cabin*



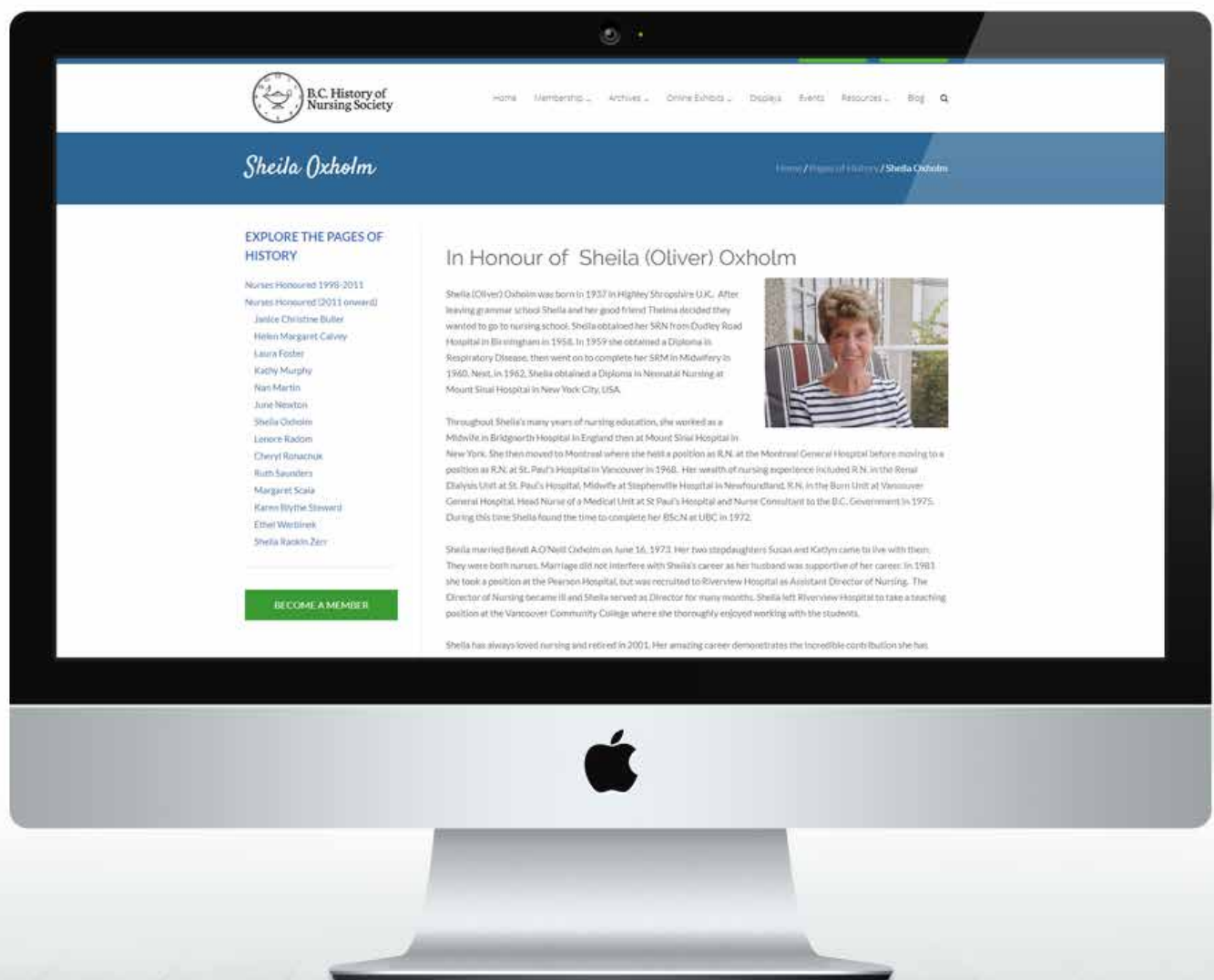
# Recognize a Nurse WITH A PAGE OF HISTORY

The “Pages of History” project was established in 1998 as a means to honour individual nurses and their careers. Recognize a nurse with a Page of History.

Tribute can be paid to any nurse (living or ‘in memory of’) by placing a Page of History on the BCHNS Website.

You can recognize a colleague, remember a friend, establish a memorial, give a graduation present, or honour yourself by developing a one page tribute to the nurse of your choosing.

By making a \$50 donation, and with signed permission, your page will be placed on our website. The application & consent will be preserved in the archives at the BCHNS UBC Office



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Special thanks to all who contributed to this issue of the BCHNS newsletter  
Next Meeting: TBA September 2020

Articles, news, and ideas for items to be included in the Fall 2020 issue should be sent to  
Lynne Esson: [esson1@shaw.ca](mailto:esson1@shaw.ca)