



Nursing's Provincial Professional Association: How We Got from There to Here:

PART ONE AND TWO OF A FOUR PART HISTORICAL REVIEW

By Dr. Sally Thorne

Part 1: From RNBC to ARNBC

With the recent changes in Canadian Nurses Association's jurisdictional membership model, and the new relationship this has occasioned between our professional association provincially and nationally, many of us feel we have 'lost the plot' on the evolution of our British Columbian professional voice over recent decades. Perhaps a brief synopsis of the trajectory can help us begin to understand the current context and better engage in what comes next.

Since an amendment to the Registered Nurses Act in 1935 changed the Graduate Nurses Association of BC (established 1918) to the Registered Nurses Association of BC (RNABC) our universal and mandatory membership in this combined regulatory body and professional association had created an unquestioned expectation for how the BC nursing world ought to operate. However, with the legislative changes in the BC Health Professions Act in 2005, and the consequent replacement of the RNABC with the College of Registered Nurses of BC (CRNBC), rapid and quite worrisome changes began. Initially, CRNBC informed its "registrants" (no longer "members") that it would continue to perform most of the professional association functions that had made the RNABC the pride of the profession; in fact, in its 2005 annual report, "visible leadership on nursing and health issues" was depicted as a core value. However, each year more of these professional policy and advocacy functions disappeared, along with the Nursing BC magazine, regional chapters, professional practice groups, policy

voting, and the annual convention, in keeping with rapidly evolving regulatory trends internationally¹. In fact, before long CRNBC, still the jurisdictional member of Canadian Nurses Association, had ceased casting a vote on behalf of BC nurses on any issue pertaining to policy.

Concurrently, our province was quite caught up in other events over those years (such as settlements with bargaining units in advance of the 2010 Olympics, and the fallout in health care from the 2008 economic downturn). In addition, most nurses still looked to CRNBC as the most appropriate source of professional advocacy information. Thus, BC nurses as a population had little appreciation for what had actually occurred beyond the name change, and instead just began to express increasing disgruntlement that their professional association had become silent on issues of nursing policy importance.²

In early 2009, a small "grass roots" group of nurse leaders³ sounded the alarm and began to meet and consult on the issue. They soon realized that there was no longer any nursing group with formal authority to help resolve the situation; thus they decided to assume that authority and try to find a way forward. In that there was no longer any organizational mechanism by which they could communicate with BC nurses, they formed an electronic "RN Network" (housed at the UBC School of Nursing, and guided by a "transitional steering committee"⁴) to provide any interested BC nurse with frequent updates at no cost. The questions driving their ongoing consultations had to do

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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 Spring Issue is Feb 15, 2022
Please send submissions to: esson1@shaw.ca

Archival Corner

World War Two --- Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps --- R.C.A.M.C.

Remembering Major Edna Rossiter (1905-1988)

Edna Rossiter emigrated from England to Canada in 1925, where she studied nursing at Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. After working as night supervisor at the RJH from 1932, she enlisted in 1941 in the R.C.A.M.C. and was principal matron of Pacific Command in army hospitals in the west coast of British Columbia. In 1944 she was appointed principal matron of nos.12 and 24 Canadian General Hospitals in England and Belgium, becoming Major Rossiter, and was awarded the Royal Red Cross, First Class.

After the war, she became Nursing Consultant for the Department of Veteran Affairs, and matron and later Director of Nursing at Shaughnessy Hospital from 1948. After her retirement from Shaughnessy in 1968, she became active in the Red Cross. On July 26, 1979 she received the Red Cross Florence Nightingale medal in honour of her devotion to the sick and wounded in difficult and perilous situations, the 14th Canadian to receive the award since its creation in 1912.



KATHY MURPHY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The September Board meeting was held via Zoom as we are still restricted due to the COVID pandemic but we now have Vaccination Passports to show at various venues! This meeting allowed our members from Connecticut, Naramata, Campbell River and the Lower mainland to join us and hear an excellent presentation by Michelle Danda regarding her PhD project to "Explore the History of Registered Psychiatric Nursing Education in BC from 1913 to 2012".

In the Board meeting we celebrated the moving of our Archive collection to the UBC Library Rare Books and Special Collections. The boxes had been packed by our long serving Archivist, Francis Mansbridge, over a year ago but due to COVID restrictions could not be transferred. In order to have the collection processed as quickly as possible, arrangements have been made to provide funding for a Co-Op Student from the Master of Archival Studies Program. The funding for this project will be taken from the Verna and Dick Splane Legacy received a few years ago.

Our Board meetings will continue with presentations by Bursary Award winners and others followed by the general meeting. Recordings are being made of some of the presentations in order for others to enjoy. In order to be included in the Zoom invitation, members are asked to notify the BC History of Nursing Society through the Contact Us item on the website which is www.bcnursinghistory.com.

Kathy



EDITOR'S DESK

LYNNE ESSON



Fall is well and truly here, it seems we went from summer to fall in the blink of an eye, I trust that October will have some crisp, sunny and colourful fall days, before winter finally sets in. I hope you enjoy this fall edition of the BCHNS newsletter, our feature article by Dr. Sally Thorne presents Part One and Two of a Four Part historical review of Nursing's Provincial Professional Association: How We Got from There to Here. Stay tuned the Spring Newsletter will continue with part 3 and 4, of this interesting and thoughtful look at our professional association evolution. Irene Goldstone has submitted an Article on Mary Elizabeth Kidd, One of BC's unsung early matrons.

I invite you to catch up on all the latest news and take a look at the BCHNS Website. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic all our meetings will continue to be held virtually, everyone is welcome to join us. See our website for details.

As always, we encourage you to submit your news items, stories, and historical photographs for inclusion in future newsletters. I want to thank all the members of the BCHNS for their ongoing submissions; their support makes the job of the newsletter editor an easy task. I trust you will enjoy this edition.

Please stay warm and safe this fall!

Lynne

with whether CRNBC's restricted mandate was real or imagined, whether the legislation that had triggered the restricted mandate could be changed and, if not, whether CRNBC had the legal right to retain all of the assets BC nurses had built up over many years if no longer fulfilling what had been core functions. In the spring of 2010, the Canadian Nurses Association, also understandably concerned about the resultant disconnect with BC nurses, offered its help to insert a meeting invitation card into an edition of *The Canadian Nurse* delivered to every nurse in the province.

That "province-wide" meeting was held in Vancouver in May, 2010, and included enthusiastic remarks from representatives from the CRNBC, BCNU, CNA, the BC Ministry of Health and others. The agenda included a historical overview of how BC had lost its professional association voice, and the announcement that, as of that very day, a new Association of Registered Nurses of BC (ARNBC) had been registered as a new entity under the Societies Act of BC. The following day, the inaugural ARNBC Board of Directors⁵ held its first meeting and began on a course of intense activity to try to find a way forward. With support from both CRNBC, under its own transformed leadership team, by September 1, 2011 it had set up a website, established its initial policy framework, and signed a memorandum of understanding with respect to CNA jurisdictional membership. Once again BC had a policy vote nationally. In May 2012, it held its first official annual general meeting, including an election for its first elected first Board members.⁶ In June of that year, when CNA held its 100th Anniversary Biennial Convention in Vancouver, ARNBC served as host organization, with a full slate of 38 voting delegates – a proud moment, and a powerful symbolic statement of how far it had come in creating a new mechanism for the professional policy voice of nurses in this province.

Part 2: From ARNBC to Coalition

ARNBC continued to develop and grow in 2012, launching a province wide consultation to meet with and hear from nurses across all health regions and in a wide range of settings as to what they hoped their professional association might accomplish in BC. This consultation process surfaced two findings that became quite influential in the subsequent years: 1) that many BC nurses had no idea what the difference was between a union, a professional association and a regulator, and 2) that their 'top of mind' concern was the enormous challenge of "collaborative practice." What ARNBC came to understand was that most nurses had no idea that the tensions between different nursing designations in the province was directly shaped by the fact that LPNs and RPNS had entirely different regulatory colleges – each of which had no interest in discussing any alignment with RN and NP regulations. This clearly alerted ARNBC to the deeply entrenched structural barriers to nursing system effectiveness and to the need for solutions that would involve significant legislative and organizational revision. Thus, while ARNBC was busily addressing an array of urgent and longstanding policy matters on behalf of nursing and

rebuilding networks of RN engagement, the need for capacity to address these kinds of wider and more long range issues became an important undercurrent to the strategic deliberations.

Because ARNBC fairly early in its lifespan was supported by the willingness of CRNBC to support the kinds of "advocacy" roles it could no longer play, and benefitted from support from Canadian Nurses Association and other individuals and organizations behind the scenes, it was able to build up a beginning infrastructure to significantly amplify its level of activity on behalf of its members, beyond that which had been possible with a voluntary working Board and part time project coordinator. In June 2014, CRNBC announced the signing of a transfer agreement with ARNBC, within which funds obtained through annual membership, would be transferred to ARNBC, along with various key functions that were no longer well suited to the mandate of a regulatory body. And in August 2014, ARNBC appointed its first Executive Director, Joy Peacock, and moved into office space at Creekside in Vancouver. It soon hired additional staff⁷ to lead ARNBC efforts with respect to government relations, communications, policy, research, Indigenous health and student/new graduate initiatives.

Unfortunately, as ARNBC was growing and becoming more demonstrably visible in the public sphere as a strong voice for professional nursing, that led to tensions with the British Columbia Nurses Union (BCNU), which did not appreciate what it interpreted as competition for being the policy voice with key players such as the provincial government⁸. Over the next few years, four different "legal challenges" against ARNBC were launched by BCNU, focusing on such matters as its legal right to universal membership in collaboration with CRNBC,⁹ and although none were ultimately successful, they significantly tied up both resources and energy.¹⁰

As these complex organizational developments were occurring, in late 2013, BC Medical Association (precursor to Doctors of BC) had issued a published statement on nurse practitioners proposing development of that role, not as autonomous practice, but rather under the clinical leadership of physicians.¹¹ This was immediately read within the NP community as a direct threat, and a signal that BCMA might move quickly to advocate a shift in government strategy toward physician's assistants – a role that is by definition under the direct control of physicians. Because the Ministry of Health by this time no longer had a designated nursing policy presence, all that had been gained since 2005 through NP legislation, regulation and education could well be at risk. Given the seriousness of this threat and the relatively small number of members at that time in the British Columbia Nurse Practitioners Association (BCNPA), ARNBC joined forces to strategize a crisis response. In the early days, this joint group called itself the BC Primary Care Nursing Coalition, in alignment with the urgency of protecting NP practice, and also included representatives from Nursing Education Council of BC (NECBC) and CRNBC.¹² It sought out senior provincial advisors such as Judy

Darcy (at that time NDP Spokesperson on Health) and Lynn Stevenson (who was Associate Deputy Minister of Health) to inform its strategic response direction.

The Coalition deliberations made it immediately apparent that advocacy toward the reinstatement of a Provincial Nursing Officer role was a top priority, such that there would be a dedicated office within the Ministry of Health to attend to the many complex policy issues specific to nursing. Because the historic tensions between nursing designations had, at least in part, contributed to the demise of the former Ministry chief nurse executive office¹³, it seemed obvious that a key step should be to find a way to bring all designations together to advocate on this issue with a single voice. Through 2014, the Coalition reached out to the Licensed Practical Nurses Association of BC (LPNABC) and to leaders in the RPN community (which did not have its own association) to forge tentative new relationships and explore common ground. As alignment with RNs and NPs had been actively discouraged by their respective regulatory bodies historically, this engagement required vision and courage by those LPN and RPN leaders. As of December 2014, the Coalition had officially reconfigured itself as the BC Coalition of Nursing Professionals, and in July the following year it was able to mount a highly successful Provincial Health Forum.¹⁴

The success of that Coalition was quickly apparent in influencing the launch of a new Nursing Policy Secretariat in the Ministry of Health, and having meaningful (sometimes quite difficult, and long overdue) dialogue between the nursing designations. Structurally, despite the vast differences in workforce numbers, each designation held an equal number of seats at the Coalition table. What the Coalition came to appreciate was the policy strength in unity and the leadership it could demonstrate in moving beyond internal differences toward common objectives. That demonstrable effectiveness, and signals from the fledgling MoH Nursing Policy Secretariat that aligning the regulatory colleges might be an important and far-reaching policy direction, catalyzed ongoing dialogue about the possibility of a taking leadership in the creation of a provincial association voice that truly represented all four of BC's nursing designations.

1. Duncan, S., Thorne, S. & Rodney, P. (2012). Understanding the implications of the changing regulatory environment in nursing: Insights from the BC experience. Vancouver: Association of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (ARNBC). <http://www.arnbc.ca/images/pdfs/understanding-implications-changing-regs.pdf>
2. Lynette Best, Heather Mass, Sally Thorne, soon to be joined by Paddy Rodney and Jo Wearing.
3. Heather Mass & Sally Thorne (Co-Chairs), Lynette Best, Paddy Rodney, Maureen Shaw, Sharon Toohey & Jo Wearing
4. Susan Duncan & Rob Calnan (Co-Chairs), Lynette Best, Suzanne Johnston, Paddy Rodney, Julie Fraser, Leanna Loy, Sally Thorne, Maureen Shaw & Jo Wearing, with 'staff support' from Heather Mass (to April 2011) and Nora Whyte (who served as project coordinator/informal executive director over the next couple of years).
5. Brenda Canitz, Christine Davidson, Carl Meadows, Jennifer Parkhill & Andrea Stack (with Rachel Bard from CNA as an appointed member,

along with Susan Duncan, Julie Fraser, Leanna Loy, Paddy Rodney & Sally Thorne from the inaugural Board).

6. Among the early and influential staff over these early years were Andrea Burton, Alix Arndt, Mike Harrison, Dawn Tisdale, Tiffany Barker, and Patrick Chiu.
7. On July 10, 2013 the BCNU published a Bulletin defending "RN members' right to choose to join newly-formed nurses' association (ARNBC)" stating that "All legal options will be explored to determine whether CRNBC has the authority to transfer \$1.5 million of nurses' insurance over-contributions to fund 'start up' costs of new nurses organization."
8. For example, a second lawsuit (notice of civil claim) launched in February 2015 sought to declare almost everything the ARNBC had done "null and void," to replace its board of directors and to cancel its 2015 annual general meeting."
9. For several years, BCNU brought busloads of its members to ARNBC AGMs for the explicit purpose of disrupting the agenda and voting down proposed business. The majority of those members had no awareness of why they were there, and many later regretted being coerced into confrontations that were discrediting to their profession.
10. https://www.doctorsofbc.ca/sites/default/files/nurse_practitioners_-_oct_2013.pdf
11. Attending the first formal strategy meeting of this group on Feb 17, 2014 were Rob Calnan, Heather MacKay, and Nora Whyte (representing ARNBC), Rosemary Graham, Stan Marchuk, Donna Nicholson, Natasha Prodan-Bhalla, Esther Sangster-Gormley and Lori Verigin (representing BCNPA), Cynthia Johansen (representing CRNBC), Sally Thorne (representing UBC), Linda Sawchenko (representing CNO group), Suzanne Campbell (representing NECBC), and Andrea Burton (serving as "consultant").
12. It was understood as common knowledge in the Ministry of Health at the time that BC nursing could not get along in the same room together in policy discussions.
13. The Forum was attended by several senior Ministry of Health Representatives, including Health Minister Terry Lake, and brought together leaders of all nursing designations to strategize nursing's contribution to the three top Ministry priorities at that time – Primary & Community Health, Surgical Services, and Rural Health. It also reflected on issues that had surfaced within nursing as key priorities – Aboriginal health, seniors' health and staff mix.
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TRIBUTE

Jessie Mantle RN, MN, Post-graduate studies in Gerontological Nursing fondly remembered by UVic School of Nursing community

Jessie Mantle, age 89, of Victoria, British Columbia passed away on Thursday, September 2, 2021. Jessie was born January 19, 1932.

Described as one of the nursing superstars of her generation, Jessie Mantle is fondly remembered by the UVic School of Nursing community. Her colleagues, many of whom were her former students, recall her significant contributions to practice, education, and mentorship over her forty-year career. Jessie remained a passionate advocate for the nursing profession and engaged with our faculty until her final days. Prior to her passing, she established the Jessie Mantle Fellowship in Nursing and requested that donations in lieu of flowers be made to the fellowship. Please read her full bio and access the donation link on the Jessie Mantle Fellowship in Nursing page:

SEE >> https://www.uvic.ca/givingtovic/award-background-info/m/j_mantle.php

JESSIE MANTLE, PROFESSOR EMERITUS, UVIC SCHOOL OF NURSING: 1981-1995

Jessie Mantle had a unique history of continuing her education across Canada and across universities. She received her nursing diploma from the Royal Jubilee Hospital School of Nursing in 1950, practiced nursing for ten years, and then returned to her studies, graduating from McGill University with a BSN in 1966.

Jessie continued to expand her academic accomplishments, starting in Boston with a certificate in psychiatric nursing followed by training in public health. She then obtained her master's degree from the University of San Francisco and followed it with post-degree work in gerontological nursing while on sabbatical leave from the University of Western Ontario. While at the University of Western Ontario, Jessie developed learning tools for students and chaired the graduate program.

In 1981, Jessie returned to Vancouver Island to take up a joint appointment as professor at the University of Victoria (UVic) School of Nursing and Clinical Nurse Specialist at Juan de Fuca Hospitals, with 50 percent of her time spent in each institution. Over the next 13 years, she taught registered nurses at UVic, developed one of the distance learning programs for the School of Nursing, and established courses in gerontological nursing.

At Juan de Fuca Hospitals, Jessie helped establish a wide set of clinical programs and committees to improve resident care. The interdisciplinary team she led founded a clinical council, an ethics committee, and care programs for special ailments. The Clinical Nurse Specialist position was so successful that it became permanent. In 1988, Mantle authored "Nursing practise in long term care agencies," included in *Canadian Nursing Faces the Future* (eds. Baumgart and Larsen).

Jessie retired in 1995, but in post-retirement she co-authored a book with Jeanette Funke-Ferber titled *Geriatric Nursing in Canada: Growth of a Specialty*. She also established the Jessie Mantle Fellowship in Nursing at UVic to assist students in graduate programs, specifically those who focus on improving the care and lives of the elderly, and strengthening the relationship amongst service agencies, researchers, and academics.



TRIBUTE

Marilyn D. Willman (1928-2021)

Dr. Marilyn Willman was Professor and Director of the UBC School of Nursing from 1977 to 1993. Originally from Michigan, Dr. Willman arrived at UBC having played a significant role in the development of the statewide system of nursing education in Texas, where she had been President of what was known as the System School of Nursing. A strong champion of a highly educated nursing workforce, Dr. Willman led the School through reconfiguration of the UBC Nursing 'laddered' program (one which students could exit after two years with a diploma, or continue on for two more to complete a degree) into a coherent four year program. She negotiated a collaborative program with the Vancouver General Hospital School of Nursing, integrating that School's students and faculty into the BSN program, and instituted an "nursing outreach" program, through which diploma-prepared nurses around the province could complete an innovative baccalaureate degree supported by live televised lectures followed by an interactive phone-in session, which reflected advanced use of learning technologies for their time.

During her 17-year tenure, Dr. Willman strongly supported the development of nursing research strength, including PhD completion for many of the existing tenure track faculty as well as the recruitment of excellent new nurse scholars. This development set the stage for the UBC School of Nursing to launch what became Canada's second PhD program in nursing in 1991. Dr. Willman retired in 1993 to live a quiet life in Richmond BC, and remained in contact with a few School of Nursing colleagues despite her declining health. In 2015, she was informed that the University of Texas at Austin, in recognition of the major role she had played in the history of their state nursing education system, has established an endowed scholarship in her name.

SEE >> <https://nursing-alumni.sites.olt.ubc.ca/in-memoriam/marilyn-d-willman-1928-2021/>



MEMBER NEWS

On August 19th Lenore Radom and Sheila Zerr had the privilege of visiting Sheila Oxholm in her new home in North Vancouver. She is a resident in the Amica Edgemont Village, a lovely independent living home in the heart of the Edgemont area of North Vancouver, with many shops and commercial establishments within short walking distance. Sheila gave us a tour of her lovely apartment, the recreation and dining areas and the beautiful gardens that are partially maintained by the residents. Sheila O. treated us to coffee and sweets in the shop across the street from the Amica Village. It was a pleasure to visit with Sheila in her new home and enjoyable to chat about the many years of experiences shared with the history of nursing group.

The Zoology Professor and the Silver Jug

By Nan Martin

There it was! The silver jug with the inscription as above!

On the third floor of Koerner Pavilion, the UBC School of Nursing's Display cabinet with its Sigma Theta Tau International awards stands right beside our BC History of Nursing Society Display cabinet showcasing our History of Nursing dolls. I have walked past the School of Nursing cabinet many times.

However, one morning in November 2020, my eye was captured by the very tarnished silver jug displayed on the bottom shelf with a brief typed note beside it telling the story of the history of the jug and the Zoology professor, as well as the name of a proud UBC Nursing Alumni and member of our society, Cathy Ebbehoj. Impressed by the jug and the story, I contacted Cathy with the idea of an article for the Spring 2021 Spring issue of BC History of Nursing Society's newsletter!

Due to pandemic restrictions, Cathy and I delayed meeting until September 2021. In the meantime, Bob Wilson, office manager, recently took the silver jug out of the display case and Cathy's colleague, Kathy O'Flynn-Magee, polished it! The jug also contained a page from Dr. Hoar's journal that he wrote in every day – identifying the date in 1979 that he taught his last class.



Excerpt from that journal page:

Wednesday April 4, 1979

Last day of lectures - full time since Sept 1939 and teaching started as an undergrad TA in 1933-34. Finished of Zoo 310 in am and course will be discontinued. Students interested in development of heart but more so in me and why I was a biologist and what I will do now.

Finished Zoology 153 with nurses discussing Lactation and Barr Bodies 4.30 – 5.30 that worst of all slots. Finished at 5.17pm and four from NUS appeared with gift, speeches, flashing pictures and all good wishes for happy trails. A nice way to end it all.

Cathy and I met in early September when I asked Cathy to share with me how she had come to receive the silver jug on behalf of UBC School of Nursing. Here is her brief reply:

From 1979, the silver jug (pitcher) held a place of honor, sitting on the sideboard (buffet) in the Hoar's dining room. After Dr. Hoar died in 2006 and the house was being packed up, Dr. Hoar's daughter, Melanie Galloway, knowing of my connection with the School of Nursing, gave me the silver pitcher to take back to the School of Nursing. The jug and Dr. Hoar's April 4, 1979 diary entry were placed in the SON display cabinet for safe keeping. Over the years, the silver jug tarnished but has now been retrieved from the SON display case, is all polished and will be ready to be displayed in the SON's new home.

My interest in the story was amplified because one of my daughters started her career in Physiotherapy by earning a Bachelor of Zoology at UBC (in the 1980s therefore too late to have experienced Dr. Hoar's lectures). It was interesting to learn that zoology lectures were part of the nursing curriculum in those days.

Dr. William S. Hoar OC FRSC (August 31, 1913, Moncton NB – June 13, 2006, Vancouver BC) was an imminent professor and head of department of zoology at the University of British Columbia. He received an Order of Canada award on June 26, 1974 and has a series of lectures named after him, that are given every year at the University of British Columbia.

It has been my pleasure to discover the provenance of the silver jug and to learn more about this honoured scientist and patient family man.

A PAGE *of* HISTORY

CHERYL ENTWISTLE

Sponsored by Sheila Zerr



Cheryl Entwistle was born in Lampman and raised in Estevan Saskatchewan, graduating from Estevan High School. She entered Regina General Hospital School of Nursing and graduated as a Registered Nurse in 1965. Following graduation she accepted a staff position at Riverview General Hospital in Calgary.

Cheryl headed to Europe as a tourist in 1966. When she returned Cheryl headed east to Ottawa to enter the University of Ottawa School of Nursing. She first obtained a Certificate in Teaching and Administration followed by a Bachelor of Nursing in 1971. Then she moved to Winnipeg to begin her teaching career. She accepted an interesting faculty position at the Misericordia Hospital where she taught for the next 7 years.

Heading west, Cheryl moved to Vancouver in 1978 to take up a faculty position at the University of British Columbia. During her UBC years she was a Lecturer, Clinical Instructor and Director of the Learning Resource Centre. Cheryl completed her Masters Degree in Education in 1984. Following graduate studies she was rehired to UBC faculty, serving in various management positions. In the final

years of her distinguished teaching career she was appointed Director of the Post RN Program. She retired in 2009.

Cheryl's professional and community involvement included executive positions with the British Columbia History of Nursing Society (BCHNS) and with the Canadian Association for University Schools of Nursing (CAUSN). She made valuable contributions to the organization and planning of national conferences. Cheryl was largely responsible for the presentation of the opera Florence Nightingale, The Lady with the Lamp in 2006 and coordinated the joint presentation between BCHNS and The Canadian Association for the History of Nursing to an international gathering of nurses from around the world.

She was involved and contributed to the National Organization of Nurse Educators, The Distance Education Organization and the Nursing Laboratory Educators.

Many nursing colleagues and students have benefited from Cheryl's deep commitment to professional nursing.

THE FERNIE FIRE

The Fernie Hospital

GENERALLY, hospitals in cities or towns, are provided, or subsidized by the municipal council. Not so in Fernie, for here Drs. Bonnell and Corsan have, since and installed, built and equipped their hospital, of which they may justly be proud, and which is likewise a decided credit to the city. In connection with work Fernie structures, the hospital building was swept away by the fire of Aug. 1, 1908, and with considerable expense, notwithstanding a heavy financial loss, the promoters began at once the erection of the present hospital. The building itself, the equipment, and general furnishings called for an outlay of some \$20,000, and the staff of trained nurses maintained, besides other necessary attendants, makes the work of running the Fernie Hospital no onerous.

Light, ventilation and convenience have evidently been paramount considerations in the planning of the new building, and by an unusual degree these aims have been successfully carried out. Upon

THE FERNIE HOSPITAL

THE DOCTORS AND NURSES

entering at the front door, a large, very tall with broad entrance leading upstairs some distance from the door, leads an impression of airy and symmetrical surroundings, which is well sustained in every department of the building. On the ground floor are located a small office and rooms for the treatment of minor cases, and those who come to the hospital for daily treatment. Connected with this is a well-appointed waiting room, also a sterilizing department, men's main surgical ward, women's main surgical ward, operating room, nurses' dining room and ordinary department; on the second floor are seven private wards, men's medical ward and women's general medical ward. In all about 50 patients can be accommodated at one time, the average number being about 30 to 35.

The operating room has received special care of design, with the result that Drs. Bonnell and Corsan have at their disposal one of the brightest, most compact and most practical operating rooms that could be produced. This room is built separate from the main building, with swinging windows ranged all around the top of the walls, and a plate glass skylight to complete the lighting and ventilating

Destruction of settler communities by fire is not a new phenomenon in British Columbia. In a 1908 article for the Canadian Nurse, Mary Elizabeth Kidd, Matron of Fernie Hospital, described the firestorm that destroyed Fernie and the subsequent evacuation of the community by train to Cranbrook. She noted that the Ktunaxa People ... "called the place where Fernie stood Death Valley." She also commented that, although the Indigenous peoples "frequent the surrounding towns, very few ever come to Fernie - and none ever stay overnight." -- Irene Goldstone

[1] Fernie Hospital 1909, and Drs Saul Bonnell and Douglas Corsan, Superintendent Mary E. Kidd, unnamed man and Nurses Mrs Mary (George) Clode, Misses Isabel Lloyd, Edith Macey, McLaughlin, Emma Harris, Mabel Wilkins.

Fernie Free Press (1994). Fernie 90 years ago. Limited Edition, (Historical Booklet), Fernie: Author. Photograph courtesy of Fernie Museum and Fernie and District Historical Society.

Identification of the nurses is based on Fernie Free Press (1994). Fernie 90 years ago., BC Directories (1908-1910), Canada Census 1901.

Aftermath to the Fire

Mary Elizabeth Hancock Kidd: One of BC's Unsung Early Matrons

BY IRENE GOLDSTONE

Mary Elizabeth Kidd's account of the fire and evacuation of Fernie does not tell us anything about her role during the fire and afterwards. However, Gibbon and Mathewson inform us that a tent village was set up and that she returned to Fernie the next day to assist with patients. She remained in Fernie while other nurses cared for patients in the doctors residence at the Coal Creek mine about five kilometers away.¹ Some injured and burned patients were cared for in the Oblate Fathers concrete mission home. Patients transferred to Cranbrook were cared for by the Sisters at St. Eugene Hospital.² Later, space in Drs Bonnell and Corsan's office building was converted to a temporary hospital where "nurses Kidd and McKibbon are on duty."³

Further, Mary Kidd's articulate but dispassionate narrative strikes me as an understatement of the terror and trauma associated with the escape from the fire and of the evacuation of patients from the hospital. One family's story illustrates this point. From the Victoria Daily Times we read that Fire Chief Daniel McDougall's wife, Theresa, had been a patient in the Fernie Hospital for the past four months, and that he had told his four children to join their mother at the hospital while he fought the fire. The patients, including Mrs McDougall and two of the children who had found their way to the hospital, were initially evacuated to a box car. But the box car, which was probably on a siding, did not provide protection from the fire and so patients were carried on stretchers or taken by buggies to the train for Cranbrook. The two missing children, aged 10 and 4, were found two days later, one in the relief camp and one in Hosmer, a community 13 kilometers away. The family retreated to Victoria where Mrs McDougall had family. Her sister arrived from Seattle to care for Theresa and the children; the Fire Chief returned to Fernie. Theresa McDougall, aged 28, died in St Joseph's Hospital, Victoria, October 29, 1908, no doubt of her underlying disease but also "following nervous shock received at the time of the Fernie Fire."⁴

The Cranbrook Herald reported on the heroism and dedication of the Fernie Hospital nurses:

*"... Nurse Cornet and Nurse Laidlaw carried, led and dragged eighteen patients out of the burning hospital at Fernie and took them to a place of safety. The Coal company sent eight men to help, but only two got there and by the time they did the nurses had already rescued the helpless ones. ..."*⁵

The experience devastated at least one nurse: "Miss Cornett [sic] of Fernie Hospital staff broke down after the terrible experience Saturday night and is spending a few days at Baynes Lake trying to recover her lost energy."⁶ The night nurse, asleep

at Home Hospital, was rescued when someone kicked down the burning [bedroom] door.⁷

There were 2,500-3,000 homeless Fernie residents housed in public buildings in Cranbrook and in a nearby refugee camp. Sanitation threatened health in both Fernie and Cranbrook. There was concern that "many campers are ignorant of the most ordinary rules of sanitation." Wash tents, bath tents, and laboratories were set up in the refugee camp. There were eighteen births reported in two days and 1,500 children, aged one day to two years, were camping in the refugee camp; condensed and fresh milk was brought for women and children.⁸

In late August, the tent city in Fernie was hit with torrential rains flattening the tents and soaking bedding. Cooking was out of doors, but local women in the few surviving homes cooked for the homeless and hungry. The weather turned cold with snow on the local mountain tops. The rebuilding of Fernie's hospital was being "pushed ahead with all speed."⁹

Who was Mary Kidd?

Mary Elizabeth Hancock Kidd was born in Orillia, Ontario, of Irish and American parents Hugh Kidd (1847-1905) and Elizabeth Jane Buchanan (1850-1937), the fifth of 10 children. The family immigrated to Canada about 1869 and by 1884 settled to farm in the Qu'Appelle Valley, North West Territories, in the traditional territory of Eleven First Nations now represented by the The File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council.¹⁰ This was during the years of unrest associated with the two North West Rebellions.¹¹

Mary Kidd graduated from the Winnipeg General Hospital Training School for Nurses in 1901. That hospital opened in 1873 and its School, the second nurses' training program in Canada and the first in Western Canada, had opened in 1887. A free-standing nurses' residence was built in 1889, and by 1894 the training program was extended from two to three years. Both were progressive steps in the early days of hospital-based schools of nursing.¹² The WGH School of Nursing enjoyed an excellent reputation and its graduates populated many hospitals in Western Canada. Fernie Hospital was a VON supported hospital between 1907-1910 and served a coal mining community.¹³ Following graduation Mary Kidd spent some time in Vancouver before joining the staff of Fernie Hospital in January 1903. In July 1904 she was appointed Matron.¹⁴

In the fall of 1910 Mary Kidd resigned to marry Ashley Noel Wilmot.¹⁵ Under the heading "Popular couple weds," the Fernie Free Press described the bride as wearing "a graceful gown of soft white satin, adorned with a bertha of Limerick lace, a veil of white tulle with a cornet of orange blossoms [and] carry[ing] a bouquet of white aforesaid roses and asparagus fern."¹⁶ They

had met in Fernie while Noel was working for the bank; he had relocated to Vancouver in 1909 to establish a real estate business.¹⁷

After a honeymoon in California, the Wilmots settled in the West End of Vancouver. Mrs Wilmot was active in the philanthropic and social life of Edwardian Vancouver.¹⁸ Their son, Ashley Douglas Kidd Wilmot, was born in 1912.¹⁹ Ashley Noel Wilmot's business prospered.

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Author Note

Irene is working on a detailed profile of Mary Elizabeth Hancock Kidd (Wilmot). She is a graduate of the Training School for Nurses, Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal (RN, 1966), McGill University (BN, 1972), and the University of British Columbia (MSc, 1981) and is a founding member of BCHNS and CAHN. She can be reached at Irene.goldstone@gmail.com.

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Footnotes

1. Gibbon and Mathewson, 1947, pp. 221-222.
2. Pestilence may follow fire, (1908, August 5), *Victoria Daily Times*, pp. 1-2.
3. Troubles of the homeless in devastated Fernie - high winds blow down tents and rain drenches bedding, (1908, August 31), *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 10; See also *Fernie Free Press*, (1908, August 5), *Item*, *Fernie Locals*, page 3.
4. Fire chief of Fernie is here - tells about the big conflagration there, (1908, August 19), *Victoria Daily Times*, pp. 1, 7; See also Mrs McDougall died this morning - death followed nervous shock received at the time of the Fernie fire, *Victoria Daily Times* (1908, October 29), p. 2.
5. Fernie swept by fire. (1908, August 6). *Cranbrook Herald*, p. 1. <http://www.crowsnest.bc.ca/fernie02.html>.
6. *Item*, *Fernie Locals*, (1908, August 14), *Fernie Free Press*, p. 3. Baynes Lake is 44 k south of Fernie and was accessible by the Great Northern Railway 1904-1937, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baynes_Lake ;
7. Pestilence may follow fire, lack of sanitation in burned area, (1908, August

But it was not to be. World War 1 and the complexities of personal life intervened.

In 1920 Mary Wilmot was appointed Matron of Kelowna General Hospital, a position she held highly esteemed, until 1944.²⁰ She died in 1966 in her 91st year at the Stillwaters Nursing Home, Kelowna.²¹ This chapter is a story that awaits to be told.

- 5), *Victoria Daily Times*, pp. 1, 2.
8. Pestilence may follow fire, lack of sanitation in burned area, (1908, August 5), *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 1-2.
9. Troubles of the homeless in devastated Fernie - high winds blow down tents and rain drenches bedding. (1908, August 31), *Victoria Daily Times*, p. 10. See also *Item*, *Fernie Locals*, (1908, August 14), *Fernie Free Press*, p. 3.
10. The File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council is the political and service organization for the Qu'Appelle Agency and the File Hills Agency, delivering programs and services to the 11 First Nations in the Treaty Four Territory. <http://fhqtc.com/member-first-nations/>
11. Note: In the Canada Census 1881, Kidd is spelled Kydd, *JPG (Image No.: 4396301_00113)* ; Nine children survived to adulthood; Canada Census Northwest Territories. 1891, *JPG (Image No.: 30953_148228-00182)* . Deaths: Kidd, (1937, February 8), *The Vancouver Sun*, p. 11; see also obituary Margaret Caroline Kidd who died in Victoria in 1957. <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/60823393/obituary-for-margaret-caroline-kidd/?xid=637>
12. Official Department [WGH graduate directory]. *Canadian Nurse*, 1907, 3 (1), p. 42 (pp. 38-46). <https://hscarchives.com/winnipeg-general-hospital-school-of-nursing/> ; See also Canada Census 1901, *JPG (Image No.: z000014942)* ;
13. Gibbon, (1947), p. 69.
14. *Item*, *Social and Personal*, *Fernie Free Press*, (1903, January 3), p. 5; *Item*, *Social and Personal*, *Fernie Free Press*, (1904, July 8), p. 5.
15. BC Archives Genealogy at http://search-collections.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/Genealogy_004401579_00986.jpg .
16. Popular couple wed. (1910, September 23). *Fernie Free Press*, p. 8.
17. East End [Advertisement]. A.N. Wilmot & Co. (1910, March 7), *Daily Province*, *Vancouver*, p. 8.
18. (Anti Tuberculosis League), *Social and Personal*, (1911, May 5), *The Daily Province*, *Vancouver*, p. 5; (List of stations for Hospital Day), *Hospital Tag Day*, (1911, May 26), *The Daily Province*, *Vancouver*, p. 6; (turkey dinner) Causal comment on women's activities and interests, (1912, December) *The Daily Province*, *Vancouver*, p. 5.
19. BC Archives Genealogy at http://search-collections.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/Genealogy_DTH_1988020583.jpg .
20. Granger, 1981 p. 20; See also Superintendent of hospital retiring: will receive allowance for 24 years of service here. (1944, October 12), *The Kelowna Courier*, p.1
21. BC Archives Genealogy at http://search-collections.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/Genealogy_004479268_01638.jpg

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