



April 15th, 1993

NURSING'S RESPONSES TO EPIDEMICS TOPIC AT ANNUAL MEETING

Twenty-seven members attended the annual meeting of the History of Nursing Professional Practice Group on Thursday, April 15, 1993. The meeting was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Vancouver, in conjunction with the RNABC Annual Meeting. This year, the meeting opened with the guest speaker and was followed by the business session to allow members and guests who were not interested in the business sessions to leave earlier.

Speaker: Irene Goldstone

"Nursing's Responses to Epidemics: Lessons from History" was the topic of Irene Goldstone, Director of Professional Education and Care Evaluation, B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS. Using slides, she discussed how epidemics and plagues have altered the face of civilization, stressing that society needs the perspective of history to help in understanding current events, such as today's AIDS epidemic in perspective.

For example, the "Great Plagues" that swept across Europe in 200-year "waves" between 564 and the mid-1800s would be readily treatable today, yet one of these resulted in more than 15 million deaths worldwide and another with more than 200 million deaths. Science and medicine have not played a major role in these epidemics, because we still have no real understanding of why The Plague eventually died out.

Nursing has always responded to in times of epidemics, she said, noting that "If there were a patron saint of nursing, Fabiola would be it." Fabiola, a Roman matron, opened her

palace as a public hospital during the malaria epidemic in Italy.

Using slides that she had collected from her travels and from her readings, she also gave a brief description of the Canadian epidemics, including those of smallpox, which decimated Canada's Aboriginal peoples, cholera, and typhus.

Goldstone, who was born in B.C., took her Bachelor of Nursing at McGill, but has been back in B.C. for 15 years and holds a Master's of Science in Health Care and Epidemiology from the University of B.C. She has been nursing AIDS patients since the first patients were diagnosed in B.C. in 1982. She closed her presentation with a review of the brief history of AIDS.

She notes that the Centre for Disease Control first identified these "unusual cases" in 1981 and that it was only in 1985 that blood screening began and 1986 when a classification system was introduced. She reported that, in 1992, B.C. has double the Canadian caseload of AIDS cases, with 90% of these patients in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland area.

*** BUDGET -- FOR INFORMATION ***

	1992 Budget ¹	1992 Actual ¹	1993 Budget	1994 Budget
<u>REVENUE</u>				
Grant - RNABC	500.00	-	500.00	500.00
Membership	700.00	815.00	900.00	900.00
Interest	25.00	97.40	-	-
Raffle	200.00	338.25	200.00	200.00
Notecards	-	1,310.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Loan	-	500.00	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	78.50	-	-
Scholarship Fund	-	1,125.00	(see below)	
	1,425.00	4,254.15	2,600.00*	2,600.00

¹ 1992 Year was only 9 months

EXPENDITURES

Meetings	250.00	190.46	250.00	300.00
Newsletter	450.00	440.42	900.00	950.00
Photocopy/Postage	200.00	190.34	200.00	250.00
Notecards	-	-	1,721.20	--
Printing of receipts	-	-	324.63	-
RNABC postage	-	10.70	50.00	55.00

Committees

AAAAA	-	-	115.00	125.00
Biographical	-	-	100.00	125.00
Constitution	-	-	100.00	-
Membership	150.00	(68.78) ¹	100.00	125.00
Memorial Doll	-	-	25.00	50.00
Oral History	50.00	-	100.00	125.00
	1,100.00	2,542.42	2,264.63	2,105.00

¹ Money included in photocopy/postage expenses

Notes

Scholarship Fund (established September 1992) is NOT History of Nursing PPG Funds

Notecards - profit of \$230.00 to Feb. 26, 1993; 490 packages on hand

Raffle Funds - \$ 917.25 (312.00 + 267.00 + 338.25); for Memorial Doll expenses

*** ANNUAL MEETING NEWS ***

The Annual Meeting of the History of Nursing Group was held Thursday, April 15, 1993, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver. For those members who were unable to attend, here is a brief review of the major items.

A balanced budget for 1993 and 1994 was approved by members attending the Annual Meeting, but Treasurer Nina Rumen proposed the possibility that fees will have to be increased at next year's meeting (for the 1995 membership year). The budget is presented on page 2.

The constitution and bylaws were approved as presented. Minor changes had had to be made to these so they could be in line with the regulations laid down by the RNABC for its professional practice groups. Copies of the new constitution and bylaws may be obtained from Vice-President Ethel Warbinek.

Elections were held to fill the open positions on the Executive. The following were elected:

Secretary:	Anne Karl
Treasurer:	Nina Rumen
Member-at-Large:	Helen Niskala
Membership Chair:	E. Brenda Flynn

Representation was made from the floor for a Victoria Sub-Group, which would allow members on Vancouver Island to hold meetings. The meeting agreed that the Executive could provide funds, similar to those budgetted for committees (approximately \$100) for expenses. As well, money from some of the committees would be available to the Sub-Group for related activities, such as

supply of oral history tapes, biographical forms, and so on. Kari Moore is organizing this group, which proposes to begin with work on oral histories from nurses on the Island. More information is available from Kari Moore.

Reports from the various Committee Chairs were presented. Most of this news has been presented in the Newsletter. See also the news in this issue from the various committees.

Under new business, Joan Doree proposed that the B.C. History Group should suggest to the Canadian Association for the History of Nursing that the many contributions of the Roman Catholic Nursing Sisters should be more formally recognized.

For more information about any of the items from the annual meeting, members may get in touch with President Helen Shore.

IT'S JUNE IN AUGUST!

The editor apologizes for the lateness of this issue of the Newsletter. Page 1 was prepared in June, but then other (paying) work interfered with preparation of the rest. The delay has also delayed the mailing of the Membership List, which was ready in June and which is enclosed for members with this issue.

The next issue of the Newsletter likely will appear in October, rather than September.

Sorry for any inconvenience! -- GZ.

* * * BITS AND PIECES * * *

MALES IN NURSING

Those who stopped by the History of Nursing Display at the RNABC's Annual Meeting shared little bits of history -- and it seems appropriate to record some of this.

Tom McKenna, who has been a long-time member of RNABC and regularly attends its meetings, thinks he may have been the first male nurse to attend an RNABC meeting. He received his nursing education in Great Britain, and when he came to B.C. he had to take some maternity experience so that he could register in this province. He took is obstetrical experience at the Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster and registered in about 1957.

Tom McKenna has been active in the "men in nursing" interest groups and he says he believes the first male student nurse at St. Paul's Hospital was Frank Bullen, who graduated about 1951. Frank Bullen had been a medical assistant in World War II and had come back to Canada anxious to take up nursing.

George Veitch McKnight may have been the first male in the nursing program at the University of B.C. He received his diploma from the one-year program in Administration of Hospital Nursing Units in 1963.

The *Newsletter* editor is anxious to hear more about males in nursing in B.C. If you recall working with male nurses or know the first male graduate from a nursing program in B.C., please pass this information along. If anyone else is doing research in this area,

please let the editor know and she will share the few bits of information she has.

"THE FAMILY BUSINESS"

Heather Mass, nursing policy consultant for the Registered Nurses Association of B.C., refers to nursing as "the family business" because four generations of her family are nurses. It must be genetic," she said in an interview when she visited the History of Nursing display during the RNABC's annual meeting.

Her grandmother, Ann Lamont MacDonald, graduated from a school of nursing in Nanaimo B.C. about 1912, then went into "independent practice." She told the family stories about nursing in the 1918-1919 'flu epidemic.

Marian MacDonald Hinks, Heather's mother, graduated in 1943 from the Royal Jubilee Hospital. She still lives in Victoria and is looking forward to attending the 50th anniversary of her class graduation this year.

Heather Hinks Mass is a graduate of Mt. Royal College School of Nursing in Calgary and took her graduate work at the University of Calgary, including a master's degree.

Her daughter, Tara Mass, is in her first year nursing at BCIT. Heather says her daughter, who is 25, at first thought she would do something else, but then decided after a few years that she wanted to be a nurse."

*** NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ***

Brief items from meetings of the Executive, May 3 and June 12, 1993.

The May 3 meeting was held at the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, where 11 members of the executive and other interested members had an opportunity to view, under the direction of docents the display "Moodyville: Milltown and Mystery." Moodyville was the first non-native settlement on the Burrard Inlet. This display featured the contributions of Emily Patterson, the first nurse in the Vancouver area.

The June 12 meeting was held at the Ladner Museum, where the executive and interested members (10 in all) once again had an opportunity to meet with museum volunteers who could point out interesting points in the displays and answer questions.

Both visits provided opportunities for the History Group to make the museum more familiar with the Group and learn of the potential interest in nursing history. Because of the visits, however, both Executive meetings were relatively brief. Highlights include:

RNABC Liaison: Past President Bev Du Gas has attended RNABC meetings for the Professional Practice Group (PPGs -- the History Group is one) presidents. The executive were once again required to fill out a questionnaire indicating topics considered of "major importance" for the coming year.

Committee Reports: The new committees and their chairs were just beginning to get to work. Reports on current activities of some committees are given on other pages.

Constitution and Bylaws: Ethel Warbinek reported that bylaws have been submitted to the RNABC for approval by the Board. These likely will be finally passed in September.

***** NEXT MEETINGS *****

Wednesday, August 25: (10 am to 4 pm) An all-day "brainstorming" meeting for the Executive to plan goals and actions for the coming year. Meeting is to be held at the home of Sheila Zerr, 5333 Uplands Drive, Delta. Members welcome to attend all or part of the meeting. (Phone 943-3012)

Saturday, October 2: (1:30 pm) Joint meeting with the Vancouver Hospital Association Nursing Alumni Archives Committee at VGH. The History Group's Panel Workshop, which was originally given at the RNABC Annual Meeting in May, will be repeated. All members are invited to attend this interesting presentation, which will be held in the old VGH student residence on Heather St.

Wednesday, October 13: Executive meeting at the home of Glennis Zilm, 2606 Bayview Street, Surrey (in Crescent Beach area). (Phone 535-3238)

Members who wish to attend executive meetings are most welcome. You may wish to participate or just "network." Meetings are held approximately once a month, usually at homes of the executive members. Please get in touch with the hostess or President Helen Shore (731-9588) or other member of the executive -- just to let us know you are coming.

*** MORE NEWS * MORE NEWS * MORE NEWS ***

Scholarship Fund

The History Scholarship Fund (actually a *separate* organization from, but administered by, the History Group) is "progressing nicely" this summer. Small donations continue to roll in regularly and one or two members are in the habit of using the fund for "in memoriam" donations. As well, two large donations were received from members (who wish to remain anonymous). To them much thanks. A note on the total in the fund will be in the next *Newsletter* (our treasurer is away). Meantime, don't forget that donations to the "History of Nursing Scholarship Fund" (that's how to make out the cheques) are tax deductible!

Oral History Committee

The Oral History Committee continues its important work on the tapes for inclusion in the RNABC collection. This summer the group has been working on information about two "pioneer nurses" who were honored by the RNABC's Richmond-Delta Chapter. Committee member Ada Butler recommended pursuing interviews of nurses honored by chapters. The nurses were Phyllis Payton, who started the Victorian Order of Nurses branch in Surrey in February 1938, and Jean Keays, who initiated and directed many public health nursing programs in the Boundary Health Unit from 1947 to 1980. Biography forms on these two nurses have been completed and the oral history tapings are "in progress," reports Committee Chair Sheila Zerr.

If you are interested in working with this committee, or have names to suggest for

possible interviews, please get in touch with Sheila. (If you cannot assist the committee, then the interview will be at the "bottom of the list" because present committee members have a number of projects in hand, and "oral history" involves more than just sitting down with the tape recorder!) The committee (which has about 10 active members) meets "at the call of the chair" and will hold a meeting this fall, but the time and place have not yet been decided.

Doll Project

The C.V. Mosby book company, which sponsored a doll for the history of nursing project last fall at Cariboo College, has advised the Group that it can no longer sponsor the event. Sheila Zerr, who looks after this event, has suggested the Mosby Memorial Doll Project be renamed the "Heritage Doll Collection" and that the Group seek alternate sponsors, but continue with the project. A major objective of the Doll project was to encourage B.C. Schools of Nursing to promote history of nursing in their curriculums. As this goal still is important, the Group would like to continue the project. The matter will be discussed at the August Executive meeting.

Victoria Sub-Group

The Victoria Chapter has held a couple of meetings since the HoN Group's Annual Meeting in April -- and reports indicate that this sounds like an active group, involving several new members. Kari Moore is president of this sub-group, which will concentrate on oral histories and biographies on Vancouver Island.

* MORE NEWS * MORE NEWS * MORE NEWS *

Book on Military Nursing Proposed

Edith Lees, a HoN Group member, is collecting information for the purpose of publishing a book about Canadian Military Nurses. She follows a family tradition of military service and says that this work, a retirement project, will give Canada's military nurses "some well deserved publicity."

Her book will begin with the origins of military nursing in Canada and continue with an overview into present day. The extent of the work will depend on responses to a request to individual nurses who served in the military for stories and information. She would be interested in hearing from anyone who may have information that will assist her in her researches. She plans to donate profits from the book to the Nursing Sisters Association of Canada.

IN MEMORIAM

Condolances are extended to the family of Evelyn Mallory (1902 - 1993), third director of the University of B.C. School of Nursing and a former Registrar and president of RNABC. "Miss M.," as she was usually referred to by staff and students, was director of the UBC nursing program from 1943-1967. She attracted some of the finest nursing leaders of her day as faculty, and students from her era have gone on to become important nursing leaders. She served a brief period as Registrar of RNABC (1941-1943) and as president from 1945-1949. She was also a founding members of the Canadian Association of University Schools of Nursing (CAUSN) and its president from 1948-1952.

Of Nurses and Networks

Those interested in biography of Canadian nurses will want to know about and perhaps arrange an interlibrary loan to borrow a copy of *The Work and Networks for Jean I. Gunn*, a doctoral thesis written by Natalie Riegler for her Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Toronto. The thesis, completed in late 1992, is a thorough and complete study of one of Canada's most prominent nursing leaders.

Jean Gunn was Superintendent of Nurses at Toronto General from 1913 to 1941 and throughout her life she proved one of the most influential of women. Among her many roles is that of a main organizer and founder of what is today the Canadian Nurses Association; she also served as its fourth president from 1917 to 1920.

In her study, Natalie Riegler states she had three purposes: to tell of Jean Gunn's life, to show that "organized nursing developed professionalizing strategies to circumvent the obstructions raised by government officials, hospital trustees and medical doctors," and to discuss the inter-relationships of nursing and feminism during Jean Gunn's period of influence. In this 552-page thesis, Riegler lays the groundwork well for her purposes, and recognizes the importance of personal networks during this period as nursing's means of getting things done.

This thoroughly researched and thought-provoking work deserves wider dissemination. I hope a published version of Riegler's biography will eventually be available.

Glennis Zilm

*** PROFILE: B.C. NURSING LEADER ***

RNABC REGISTRATION NUMBER: #1



Charlotte (Scharley) P. (Wright) Bryce-Brown
(1879 - 1944)

When the Graduate Nurses Association of B.C., the forerunner of the Registered Nurses Association of B.C., finally achieved its goal of registration for qualified nurses in 1918, the first nurse to be entered on the register was Scharley Bryce-Brown. She had been the president of the Graduate Nurses Association of B.C. from 1912 to 1917 after having been instrumental in bringing together 68 nurses from Vancouver, Victoria, and Kamloops to the host city of New Westminster to form a provincial nurses' association. Yet, despite her efforts for B.C. nurses, her name today is not well-known and recognized.

Charlotte (Scharley) P. Wright was born in Toronto June 1, 1879. She was the granddaughter (likely on mother's side) of Sir Matthew Crookes (or possible Crooker) Cameron of Toronto. She took her nursing education at Farland Training School, Harper Hospital, Detroit, graduating in 1904. A history of the hospital records the recognition given to Charlotte Wright by the Harper board of trustees for her "dedication and self-sacrifice."

"No more perfect instance of this can be cited than the selflessness of Student Nurse Shirley (or Charlotte) Wright of the class of 1904. Her roommate and classmate, Nellie McComb, contracted smallpox ... and was sent to the pest house. The nursing facilities there were virtually nil; even the doctors did not relish looking after the patients. Some doctors, never having seen a case of smallpox, refused to attend stricken patients. The outlook, then, for Nellie McComb was bleak. But she was not abandoned. Her friend Shirley did not think twice about what she felt to be her duty. She at once volunteered to accompany the sick girl to the pest house and to nurse her. She was allowed to do so, with the happiest of results. Nellie recovered under the tender ministrations of Shirley who, fortunately, did not contract the disease." (Woodford & Mason, 1964, p. 179)

After graduation, she moved to New West-

minster. Although little is known about her early career, she was that city's first School Nurse when the move to public health nursing began. She became active in the nursing alumnae association in the city and it is apparent that she was an organizer of considerable merit.

History Group member Esther Paulson recalled in an interview that Scharley Wright had been the inspiration for her to enter nursing. Miss Paulson said the School Nurse had come to visit, wearing her uniform, and had impressed and inspired the young girls in the class.

Scharley Wright was third president of what is now the Canadian Nurses Association, holding office from 1914 to 1917, during which term she married and became the first married executive officer in the national nursing association. Issues prominent during her term were purchase of The Canadian Nurse, incorporation of the Canadian National Association for Trained Nurses (as CNA was called at that time), affiliation with the Canadian National Council of Women, and support for nursing care and the war effort in World War I.

About 1915, she enlisted in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Nursing Corps and served as matron of a military hospital in Edmonton (one source says Calgary). Sometime about 1916, she married Robert Bryce-Brown, also of New Westminster. She continued to serve in her presidential offices and with the forces, but in 1919, as was expected of married women of her era, she retired from active nursing.

She continued to use her nursing background, however. She remained interested in pub-

lic health and welfare work for the city and was president of the local branch of the Victorian Order of Nurses when they provided the public health nursing in the city. She was also active in the local branch of the Red Cross. A prominent member of the Holy Trinity Cathedral, she was president of its women's auxiliary for seven years and was a vice-president of the Diocesan Board of the Anglican Church.

Charlotte Bryce Brown died in New Westminster June 9, 1944, after a long illness; she was 65. Her obituary stressed her contributions to nursing in the city.

References:

Despite her importance to nursing little information is available on this woman. I have drawn from a variety of sources, only a few of which are listed. The photograph is from the CNA Library's Collection.

Meilicke, Dorothy, and Larsen, Jenniece. Leadership and the Leaders of the Canadian Nurses Association. In A.J. Baumgart and J. Larsen (Eds.), Canadian Nursing Faces the Future (2nd ed.) (pp. 519-555). St. Louis: Mosby Year Book, 1992.

(Obituary) "Mrs. R.B. Brown, prominent in nursing, dies." The British Columbia Weekly, June 12, 1944, p. 16.

Woodford, Frank B., and Mason, Philip. Harper of Detroit. Detroit: Wayne State University, 1964, p. 179. (Citing information from Harper Hospital Trustee's Minutes 1987-1913, p. 113.)

* REMINISCENCES OF A PIONEER NURSE *

By Frances Stearns, RN, (Ret'd)

This brief article continues the story of Frances Pullman Stearns' nursing education. (Part one was in the November 1992 issue.) Mrs. Stearns, who recently joined the History Group, is 93 years old and lives in Chase, B.C. She wrote down the story of her nursing career for herself and her family, but sent a copy to the RNABC in case others might be interested. A copy of the full manuscript is available through the RNABC Library. The year is 1923; the School is St. Paul's Hospital, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

My first night duty term came when I was eight months in training. I had male and female patients, mostly male, on first floor. About my third night I had an emergency brought in at 7:10 p.m., a young man of 19. He was brought in 18 miles in the bottom of a wagon box by a team of horses. He had been doing some disking on the farm and the team he was driving shied at something and jolted the young man off the seat; he fell behind the horses and the disk went over one of his legs. He had a compound fracture in his ankle, tibia and fibula fractured in two places, and a spiral laceration right down to the bone from knee to ankle.

What a mess! The lacerations were packed solid with dirt and blood. The surgeon was waiting for him, and first gave him an anti-tetanus shot, then right to O.R. When he came back to the ward all I could see was a leg full of tubes which had to be irrigated with Dakin's Solution turned off and on every 20 minutes. The

solution must be used right on time. The surgeon came with the patient from O.R. and said to me, "Nurse, it's up to you whether this young man goes home on one leg or two. He was in hospital for three months, but walked out of the hospital on both legs.

Famous last words while on night duty were, "I never sat down once all night!" There was no time to study while on nights. You'd be tired enough to want to sleep the clock round, but had to be up at 1:30 p.m. for class for one hour, then back to be for another hour or two of "eye shut." ...

To get a patient ready for operating in those days meant soap suds enemas at night and a.m. Paint area with iodine, place a sterile towel on area and then a Scultetus bandage (many-tailed bandage) over it. By the time you finished it would probably be 8:00 or 8:30 p.m. If it should happen on a night of a lecture, you left the floor at 7 p.m., changed into a clean apron and bib, and then went to the Lecture Room. When it was over, back to the floor to finish the work you had started with the new patient. The next morning, you repeated the iodine, towel, and bandage and got the patient's chart ready for the Operating Room. After the patient left the ward, you made up a surgical bed and put two hot water bottles in it.

After that was done, you turned your
(more)

attention to other patients with the help of a probationer. There would be douches, enemas, dressings, irrigations, compresses, hot fomentals -- some every hour, some every three or four hours -- medications, and interstitials. You went with the doctors when they visited their patients and assisted them in doing dressings.

There were no recovery rooms in those days, so when patients came back from the O.R., you had to sit with them until they were fully conscious. Ether and chloroform were used then, which made some patients very nauseated, with vomiting. Some patients got Ether Pneumonia, which was serious.

Pneumonia was treated with sinapisms [mustard plasters, made from scratch] every six hours, lots of fresh air, pneumonia jacket, inhalations, plenty of fluids, and cough medicines. You looked for a crisis on the ninth day. If the temperature dropped to almost normal, you knew your patient was going to get better, but if no crisis by the 10th day, you could be pretty sure the patient would not survive.

I had a Pneumonia case out in the country 10 miles from town not long after I graduated. The patient weighed 270 pounds. He had to be kept warm and in Fowler's position (semi-upright). I had everything -- blankets that would hold heat, hot water bottles, bricks, and stones heated in the kitchen range oven. To bathe and make the patient comfortable, I had to shut the wide open window and put a coal oil heater in the room to warm it up. This case was in the country in December; the temperature outside was 40 below zero, and almost the same inside after I opened the window. I wore a big heavy jumbo

knit sweater and the farmer's sheepskin lined jacket on top of it, and his overshoes on top of my own. When my patient slept, I'd go to the kitchen to get warm. The patient survived the crisis. ...

Now I am into the last year, just nine months to go. From the O.R. I went to Obstetrics for four months, two of them on night duty, working with one of my classmates. We were a good team.

Unless it was an emergency case, an enema was given to the woman before [strong] labor pains began. One evening my co-worker said she would give the enema to a new patient just admitted, a multip (second baby), if I'd make and take to patients hot chocolate and arrowroot biscuits. The patient was not expecting for three or four days but, as she lived out of town on a farm, her doctor thought she should be in hospital.

I was walking down the hall with a tray of mugs when I heard, "Pully! (my nickname) Pully! It's in the pan!" I replied, "What's in the pan?" Mary said, "The baby came with the enema. No pains!" I phoned downstairs to the night Sister and the supervisor to get the doctor stat, then I went to help.

Mary had the baby out of the pan, a lovely 7 1/2 pound baby girl. The supervisor cut the cord and the doctor arrived just when the placenta was expelled. Everything went well, no bad results. We did have one intern, but he was in the O.R. assisting that evening.

Never a dull moment in Maternity, but I loved it.

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RAFFLE WINNERS

The 1993 "Loony Raffle" held during the RNABC's annual meeting brought in \$317.05. After all expenses were taken into consideration, the net amount raised was \$277.94.

First prize winner (25 Loons) was Mrs. K. Matsuno of Mission. Winners of the book prizes both throughout the RNABC annual meeting and at the History Group meeting were: Sandi Bruce, Joy Watkins, Shirley Simpson, Bruce Wells, Val MacMillan, Marie Hewitt, Sharon Simpson, and Sharon (Laine) Jackson.

Winners of the History of Nursing posters, donated by C.V. Mosby for door prizes at the History Group's annual meeting were Betty Robertson and Janet Gormick.

CNA Memorial Book

Two of the four B.C. nominees for inclusion in the Canadian Nurses Association In Memoriam Book were accepted by the CNA Board. The brief biographies prepared by the History Group on Mary Ard. MacKenzie and Sharley (Wright) Bryce-Brown will appear in this honor roll of Canadian nurses.

The other two nominees were not accepted by the CNA Board. No explanations are offered by CNA, but it may be that both Margaret Campbell (1992) and Beatrice Johnson Wood (1992) did not qualify as of national importance. The Executive plans to

discuss further nominations at its next meeting.

The CNA book honors deceased nurses who have achieved national renown, usually those who have been involved with the national organization. The book was started in 1989 and to the end of 1992 included 32 nurses, plus an honor role of those nurses who died in World War I.

Nominees to be submitted in 1994 include those who died up to 1959 and in 1993. If you know of someone who should be nominated for inclusion, please let a member of the Executive know. If possible, provide, in writing, some background information to assist in starting the biographical file. We have already begun to gather files on Sister Columkille and on Emily Eliza Matthews for next year's submission.

WOMEN'S HISTORY GROUP

The Canadian Committee on Women's History, which also has regional groups, has about 200 members across Canada actively promoting more interest in the history of women in Canada. The majority of members seem to be in history departments in universities. The group publishes two newsletters a year.

HoN Group members who are interested in obtaining more information should write to Patricia Prestwich, Department of History, University of Alberta, 2-28 Tory Building, Edmonton, AB T6G 2H4.

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NURSING ARCHIVES

Alberta

The Alberta Association of Registered Nurses' Museum and Archives had its official opening April 28, 1993. This place for history is also making history in attempting to provide a place for Alberta nurses to preserve their past and thereby secure their future. Part-time Archivist Lorraine Mychajlunow hopes to bring the AARN's growing archival collection into the computer age and to link the Alberta collection with others across Canada in the coming year.

The Alberta collection received strong support last fall with the donation, by Dr. Winston Backus, of a priceless Florence Nightingale lamp used in the Crimea. The lamp had been given to his wife by the granddaughter of Mary Stanley. Stanley had been one of the Nightingale nurses in Scutari.

The AARN Archives also recently received the donation of the personal papers and documents of Dr. Shirley Stinson, one of Canada's renowned nursing leaders. Dr. Stinson, nursing professor at the University of Alberta, is a former president of the Canadian Nurses Association and an ardent champion for nursing history. Many of her graduate students at the University of Alberta are contributing to historical research.

The AARN's Museum, which is located in the AARN building in Edmonton, is featuring a

series of photographs of past presidents and honorary members throughout the building this summer. As well, the Archivist has arranged one-day workshops on collection of oral histories to be held at four sites throughout the province.

Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association also has a collection of Florence Nightingale memorabilia. The five special items that form the heart of the collection include a glazed brown teapot, a picture from Miss Nightingale's room at the family home at Lea Hurst, a brown leather bag that she used to carry her prayer book to church, a note concerning her mother's effects, and a special family letter.

The items were presented to the SRNA in the early 1950s by Mrs. Mary Booth (nee Walker), who was born at Holloway, one of the Nightingale estates joining Lea Hurst, the family home. The collection is officially known as "the Booth collection." Information on the collection was supplied to the Editor by the SRNA Librarian Alice Lalonde.

For information: Cecil Woodham-Smith's 1951 biography, *Florence Nightingale*, has been reissued, in hardcover, without change, by McGraw-Hill. If you have never read it, you might want to have a look for it. This biography is considered the "classic" one -- although does not touch on a number of areas raised by later researchers.

*** BOOK REVIEW ***

Plague: A History of Smallpox in Montreal, by Michael Bliss. Toronto: Harper Collins, 1991. (Illustrated, 306 pp.)

Reviewed by Ethel Warbinek

Michael Bliss has written a vivid account of a terrible disaster that befell Montreal in the mid-1880s -- a visitation of the Plague. Montreal, typical of cities of this era, was a dirty and smelly place, particularly in the summer months. City politicians had ignored a garbage problem that increased the potential for illness. Winter cold brought a reprieve -- until the snow and ice began to melt.

On February 28, 1885, a conductor on the Grand Trunk Railway's western train was diagnosed with smallpox. He was admitted to the Hotel Dieu hospital in Montreal. So began a year-long saga of bungled medical and nursing care, compounded by overwhelming poverty, superstition, and ignorance. As Canadian historian Bliss explains in this book, smallpox at the time could be stopped because of the availability of the relatively new vaccination procedure. However, as he points out, "Francophone Montrealers were less likely to be vaccinated than other nationalities." English-speaking Montrealers rushed to be vaccinated and re-vaccinated and hence were spared. This public health controversy divided the citizens into two camps: those who were terrified of smallpox and got vaccinated and the others who accepted its presence as "one of God's scourges."

As an aside, this was also the year of Louis Riel's North-West rebellion, and national

attention was focussed on this and not on the catastrophic events unfolding in Montreal. The epidemic lasted 15 months and 91% of those who died in Montreal were French Canadian. Official records noted 9,600 cases of smallpox in the city, although the number probably was much higher. The official count showed 3,234 deaths in the city of Montreal, with 86% of the victims children under age 10. As Bliss stresses in this detailed account, "More than three thousand people, most of them children who never had the opportunity to help themselves, died. Every one of these deaths could have been prevented."

As a result of the epidemic, the Quebec legislature created a provincial Board of Health. However, the anti-vaccinationist lobby continued and vaccination was widely neglected in Quebec despite the lessons from the tragedy of 1885-1886. Smallpox revisited the city in 1888 and in 1897-1898, although it was more effectively contained in those epidemics. Smallpox disappeared from Canada for good in 1944.

This book, which reads like a documentary, describes the events as they unfold during 1885. It alerts one to the overwhelming power of fear, superstition, and ignorance. An analogy can be made with the world-wide AIDS epidemic of the 1990s. It is to be hoped that we have learned some lessons from the events of the past.

Wanted: History Group members willing to identify new books that should be reviewed and to review books for this page. Please get in touch with the editor at (604) 535-3238. Deadline for reviews for the next issue is September 28.

*** EDITORIAL ***

Pictures of Health

The pictorial record of nursing in British Columbia is, if you will pardon the pun, "under-developed." Those interested in preserving nursing history need to focus attention on this area for research.

It may be that there actually is no dearth of photographs, once a researcher begins to search through various archival collections. However, even when photos can be found, two further problems areas can be identified.

First, until about the 1980s, there is a shortage of photographs showing nurses nursing. Hospital and community archives have numerous photographs, but these are largely class photographs and head and shoulder portraits of individuals taken at graduation. Snapshots of nurses "off-duty" also may be found, usually from student yearbooks. Occasionally, formal hospital photographs showing nursing, say for the opening of a new building or when a new technology was introduced, may be found. However, few photographs seem to have been taken of nurses actually giving care.

Second, information about who is in the photographs, when they were taken, and what is happening is sadly lacking. This latter point leads to some interesting detective work for those who are seeking photographs to illustrate an article or book. However, as Archivist J.R. Davidson points out, one must learn how to "read" a photograph. "A photograph is an historical document in its own right," he says. And, if we look closely, it often can tell us

things about the past that we may not find in other documentation.

Recently, I had the opportunity to learn just exactly how that applies and to learn, based on an article by Davidson, just how to look at a class photograph from the 1940s and find several historical points that needed further checking.

The photograph showed a class of 42 students from the Vancouver General Hospital from about the mid-1940s. The photograph was from memorabilia kept by Margaret Campbell, who entered the VGH School in September 1944; she could be identified as one of those in the second row. Closer "reading" of the photo reveals some additional information. It is a "formal" photograph, with the students all carefully posed, and was likely taken by a commercial photographer, possibly, as was typical of the time, for the student yearbook. It likely was taken sometime during her first year, definitely after "capping." All students are wearing the "small bibs" typical of the junior classes, and the two whose legs can be seen are wearing black shoes and stockings. A close examination reveals that "hair codes" were in effect, for none of the hair touches the collar.

Three other interesting points stood out. All except two students are completely dressed in white uniforms -- something unusual for the time. Further detective work with alumnae of the period revealed that a few classes, because of shortages of blue material late in World War II, wore white throughout their training. One small piece of blue material was obtained, and the students of this class wore a band of this on each sleeve.

The two students in blue uniforms reminded me that students who missed part of their classes or ward experience because of ill health had to drop into the class behind. And, finally, one of the students appeared to be of Asian descent, leading to further detective work to discover when the Vancouver General Hospital had first admitted "oriental" students and what had happened to Japanese student nurses during the internment of Japanese during the War.

Photographs donated to the History of Nursing Group by Esther Paulson -- of RNABC and CNA meetings during the 1940s -- avoided another common problem: identification of individuals. Miss Paulson did what few nurses have done -- she named as many individuals as she possibly could in each photo and attached a legend that now accompanies the photos in their new home at CNA Archives.

These small points have implications for nurses who are putting their own historical documents in order. Photograph albums are some of the most prized archival documents -- but photos need to be carefully stored, and notes giving a bit of background about the scene, the individuals in the picture, and the date will help researchers of the future.

If possible, keep negatives (in protective mylar sleeves) as well as the prints. Do not keep your photos in the brittle plastic covers and sheets available in most stationary stores and do not paste or tape the photos into albums. Do not use ink on your photos and do not "press" with a pencil. Identification is best made on a separate sheet, using acid-free paper for fine photographs. The paper can be folded around the photo carefully. Do not use paper clips.

We all should be taking some care to preserve our "personal archives," whether for family or for donation to a formal collection. The photograph albums of your nursing years would be an excellent place to start.

Glennis Zilm

Reference:

Davidson, J. R. How to read a photograph. In Jan Gould, *Women of British Columbia* (pp. 213-215). Saanichton, B.C.: Hancock House, 1975.

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THE HISTORY GROUP'S NEWSLETTER

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