
◆ HISTORY OF NURSING NEWS ◆

Volume 7 Issue 4

January 1997



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: OLD TEXTBOOKS—Assets or Liabilities?

Now that 1997 is with us, we can look forward with excitement and anticipation to our upcoming International History of Nursing conference. The committee has been working hard and it will be a memorable event. I hope you will seriously consider attending. Some of you have asked me if we need volunteers, and I have assured everyone that indeed we do. More information about this in the next newsletter.

This week I happened to find a copy of an old text book in the VGH School of Nursing Alumnae Association Archives titled: The Educator, Cause and Cure of All Diseases. 5th edition, written by Dr. M.E. & R. C. Congar in 1887. This book contains fascinating information on the approach to health and illness 100 years ago. The authors are fanatical about the benefits of fresh air, sunshine, cleanliness and copious amounts of hot lemonade as a cure for all that ails us. "Hot, raw lemonade is one of the indispensable remedies in all acute diseases." The chapter on fevers and inflammation includes information that is erroneous and dangerous, but does reflect the thinking of some professionals of the day. For example, the authors condemn the practice of vaccination for the prevention of smallpox and instead

recommend a diet of gruel from corn and other grains, together with cayenne pepper. In three days "the patient will have passed all the viruses through the pores. ...the antidote will so neutralize the virus in the system as to remove all danger of contagion". A chapter is devoted to dress and the "death-destroying corset". "Reader, how many of your own aches and ailments, weaknesses, and wretched feelings, come through your own or mother's accursed corset strings!" It entreats men to adopt the slogan "natural waists or no wives"! Amusing as this is today, some information is current, such as the benefit of laughing.

The discovery of this book has brought to mind again the importance of preserving texts and other "popular" books that were in general circulation

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during certain periods. These provide us with a vital link to the past. Should we keep old books? I believe we should. But then questions arise: where do we store them and how do we preserve them? The executive committee is studying this problem. If you have suggestions please let us know.

Ethel Warbinek, President

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE AND RENEWALS

It's time to renew your membership in the History Group. Please use the application form found on the white center insert in the newsletter. Your continuing support enables us to offer educational programs, communicate with members through the newsletter, honor nurse's contributions to health care and work toward preserving the history of nursing in British Columbia.

Also included in this mailing is our new membership brochure. We are reaching out to current members in an attempt to expand our membership. We urge you to use the brochure to tell a nursing colleague about the History of Nursing Group and urge them to join us today!

Through our knowledge and study of the past, we strive to understand present day nursing and thereby better plan for the future. In the words of Kalisch and Kalisch "we can not see ahead without looking back". A strong membership base gives us the financial resources and support to move forward, ever mindful of the past.

Anne Karl, Membership Chairperson

NEW NURSING HISTORY NOTE CARDS

A sample of the new nursing history note card is also included in this mailing. The card commemorates the upcoming **History of Nursing International Conference**, June 12-15, 1997. The card features a stained glass window in Christ Church Cathedral, Burrard at Georgia in Vancouver, the site of the inter-denominational evensong on June 14.

The Christ Church card recognizes the second of eleven public monuments to nurses in Vancouver. The outstanding photography of *Edward Trody* captures the beauty of this memorial to the Nursing Sisters of Vancouver. The window was designed and funded by *Major J. Mathews*, City Archivist as a memorial to his wife *Emily Eliza Edwardes* and a tribute to the nursing profession. *Emily Eliza*, a 1902 graduate of the Vancouver General Hospital, was a nursing sister during World War I serving in England and Salonika. With her husband, she is co-founder of the City Archives in Vancouver.

Please refer to the white center insert for order forms and more information about the nursing history note cards.

Nina Rumen, Treasurer, International Conference Committee

HISTORY CONFERENCE UPDATE

The B.C. History of Nursing Professional Practice Group has been preparing for the **International History of Nursing Conference**, June 12-15 1997, to be held at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver. The conference is jointly sponsored by the B.C. Group, the Canadian Association for the History of Nursing (CAHN), and the Association Canadienne Pour L'Histoire Du Nursing (ACHN).

This is expected to be the largest nursing history conference ever with nurses from more than 15 countries already agreeing to participate. Sixty papers and 11 posters have been accepted by an international review panel. Two plenary panels are planned.

The conference will begin with a public session and salute to Canadian history. Nursing and the RCMP will spotlight their shared history in Canada's north, followed by a keynote address on Canada's health care system by former federal Cabinet minister *Monique Bégin*.

Early registrations (before April 30, 1997) are encouraged. For more information contact Sheila Rankin Zerr at 1-604-943-3012.

Sheila Zerr, International Conference Chairperson



NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

March Program Meeting

The History of Nursing Group, under the leadership of Glennis Zilm, has organized a very interesting March program featuring a panel presentation on The Teaching of Nursing History. The program is a joint presentation of the History of Nursing Professional Practice Group, the Nurse Educator's Professional Practice Group, and the Archival Committee of the Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) School of Nursing Alumnae Association.

The program will be held from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM on **Saturday, March 8, 1997**. The presentation will be in the meeting rooms on the Ground Floor (basement level) of the old Student Nurses' Residence on Heather Street. (southwest corner of 12th and Heather). Paid parking is available in the Parkade on 12th Avenue. Street parking is limited because of "residents only" parking rules.

The program will open with a panel presentation with members of the History of Nursing and Nurse Educator's groups participating. Input and informal discussion from the audience will be encouraged. Following the program refreshments will be served in the Alumnae Room by the Archival Committee and there will be an opportunity to view the VGH historical collection.

Plan to attend and **RSVP** to Glennis Zilm (1-604-535-3238) by **Monday March 3, 1997** so that arrangements for refreshments can be made. Look for a flyer in your mail closer to the date with more detailed information.

April Annual Meeting

The 7th Annual History of Nursing meeting will be held on Thursday, April 10, 1997 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Vancouver in conjunction with the RNABC's annual meeting. There will be a continental breakfast starting at 9:00 AM followed by a short business meeting. Plans are underway for a memorial display. Look for more information in the next newsletter!

Resolution to the RNABC Board of Directors

The History of Nursing Group and the Nursing History Preservation Group at Riverview have been working toward obtaining special archival space in an historic building on the Riverview lands to preserve, and make available to the public, the unique history of psychiatric nursing and mental health services in British Columbia. To that end, History group members *Helen Shore, Don Ransom, and Anna Tremere* prepared a resolution which was approved at the November meeting of the RNABC Board of Directors.

The Board has agreed to "petition the premier, MLA's, and mayors and councils of Coquitlam, New Westminster and Burnaby to set aside archival space on the Riverview Hospital site to preserve and provide a public display of artifacts related to psychiatric nursing and services".

This resolution and the importance of lobbying governments to preserve archival sites will be raised at the Issues Forum at the RNABC Annual Meeting in April.

RNABC OPENS WEB SITE

Why not visit the RNABC at it's internet address? You can keep abreast of current issues by going to:

<http://www/rnabc.bc.ca>

NURSING SISTERS TELL THEIR STORY



Ruth McIlraith, Florence Dougherty, Edith Lees, Joan Doree and Muriel Down

At the November 16, 1996 meeting of the History of Nursing Group five distinguished Nursing Sisters (pictured above) told their touching stories of service during war time. More than twenty members and guests attended the gathering held at Shaughnessy Hospital, arranged by *Glennis Zilm*, catered by *Shirley Holtzman* and recorded on tape by *Jill Thompson*.

Helen Shore moderated the panel and set the stage for the afternoon with these introductory remarks: "Nursing sisters have had a long and proud history for over a century in Canada's armed forces. It began with twelve nurses who served with field hospitals in the North-West Rebellion of 1885. There were two groups of nurses who went from Canada to serve in the South African War, commonly known as the Boer War, which lasted from 1899 to 1902. These nurses gained such a solid reputation that in 1901, the Canadian Nursing Service was established as part of Canada's military forces. Since then, Canada's nursing sisters have continued to earn a high reputation in caring for Canada's wounded in two World Wars and the Korean operations, the Gulf War, as well as for their contributions to the health of Canada's armed forces, their families and their communities in times of peace."

Helen introduced each of the speakers. "During World War II Canada operated two hospital ships, both of them staffed by medical officers and nursing sisters of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps (RCAMC). **Ruth (Littlejohn) McIlraith** joined the *Lady Nelson*, Canada's first hospital ship in April, 1943. **Florence (Kirkpatrick) Dougherty** served at #22 Canadian General Hospital in Bramshott and at Sogel in northwest Germany. **Edith Lees** made military nursing her career. She bears the distinction of serving in the RCAMC, the Merchant marine, the Royal Canadian Navy and in the United States military. **Joan Doree** served at a specialty hospital

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(Basingstoke Plastic Surgery and Neurological Hospital) designated to care for special types of casualties. Muriel Down was associated with the Para Rescue School formed in Edmonton. World War I flyer and veteran bush pilot, Captain W.R. (Wop) May has been credited with fathering the idea of parachuting aid to stranded fliers in rough country where other access was impossible. In 1951 nurses could volunteer for the very rigorous para-rescue work that had previously been limited to airmen and doctors."

Helen next recognized the service of three other members of the History Group who were unable to attend the gathering: "Marnie McLean and Helen Mussallem both served at Canadian General Hospital #19, mobilized as a 600 bed hospital in Canada in April, 1944. They were sent overseas that year to Marston Green in England where the #16 Canadian General Hospital had been caring for civilian casualties from the devastating bombing of the Birmingham-Coventry area. Nina Rumen served in the peacetime Canadian army between 1951 and 1975. She was overseas at Iserholam in Rhineland (1954-1956), nursing in a former SS Barracks under British command. In addition Nina served in Lahr, Germany (1970-1971) and at Churchill on Hudson's Bay, north of Winnipeg, where she was in charge of the operating room and the case room. Nina helped to care for the families of the military as well as the Indians and Eskimo's who lived in the community."

The very moving stories of our guest's experiences during war time are precious accounts. Often touched with humor, they clearly show nursing's ability to adapt to difficult conditions, meet patient's needs, and maintain professional standards. In the next few issues of the Newsletter each of the stories will be presented for your enjoyment. Here is the first one!

BASINGSTOKE MEMORIES: 1944-1945 by Joan Doree

More than 50 years later memories of Basingstoke Plastic Surgery and Neurological Hospital still float around in my head. How did I get to this Canadian Army Hospital soon after D-Day in June 1944, and what happened until the summer of 1945 when it closed for good? What I have written is a mere fragment of that year in my life. Other people will probably remember the place differently because, after all, memory does play tricks on us.

In January 1944 while working as a general duty nurse at Vancouver General Hospital I received my call to go into the Army. Off I went to the then unknown B.C. interior to a town called Vernon. There I became a 2nd Lieutenant Nursing Sister working in the Vernon Military Hospital and discovering the beauties of the Okanagan valley.

Suddenly in May 1944 while still assembling all the necessary bits and pieces of my Army uniform and equipment and learning how

to be a member of the Canadian Army, I was caught up in one of the strange unfathomable ways of the Army. With less than 2 days notice I was sent off to Wainwright Alberta where no one was expecting me and 48 hours later I was on a train again en route to Vancouver. Apparently I was on an overseas draft. I reported in at Vancouver but many days later I was still trying to find out what I was to do. Finally, I went to the Vancouver military office in the old Vancouver Hotel (no longer standing) where a young C.W.A.C. officer said to me rather sternly "Where have you been? You've missed your overseas draft". I am probably the only military person on record who has had a 2 week embarkation leave! The usual leave was 3 days.

At last I was sent on the 4 day train journey to a holding unit in Debert, Nova Scotia, as a reinforcement rather than as part of a particular Army hospital. Soon after, I sailed

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from Halifax on the hospital ship "Lady Nelson". Ten days later we docked in Liverpool, England and eventually I was posted to the Basingstoke Plastic Surgery and Neurological Hospital in Hampshire in the south of England. This was the specialized hospital of the Canadian Army for troops with severe burns, smashed faces, head and spine injuries, neurological problems and mental illness.

I found out later that although nearly all soldiers knew that the word Basingstoke meant you had "gone crazy" and had been sent to this terrible place for treatment, few knew that it was also a hospital for burns, facial injuries and head and spine injuries, too. It is interesting that the word "psychiatric" never ever appeared in the official name of this hospital.

My year at Basingstoke was spent mostly on ward 12, one of the two burn units. The stench of forty severely burned people lying in two long rows in a Nissen hut hit like a blow every morning. Then as the day wore on everything started to fall into place and we coped as best we could. We never had enough staff, and equipment and supplies were often lacking and not always in good condition. Between two burn wards which totalled 80 patients we eventually had 3 gatch beds. All the other patients lay on low wheel-less army cots, not very comfortable for the patients and difficult for the staff. Chairs were scarce so we sometimes sat on the patient's beds to give feedings and do treatments and dressings.

The application of wet saline dressings was the usual form of treatment used to clean up burned areas in preparation for early skin grafts. The doctors spent their long days in the operating room repairing the terrible burn wounds and the nurses were responsible for all the dressings. A small number of the very worst patients were put into a saline bath to have their dressings soaked off and later re-dressed. This bath operated both day and night and was shared by the two burn wards. The rest of the patients had to have dressings done in their beds.

In the early stages of treatment most of

our patients were given penicillin injected hypodermically every three hours, day and night. Finding places to put the needle was a problem.

On arrival at the hospital, and later too, most of our patients received intravenous injections of four times concentrated plasma to counteract the colossal loss of body fluid through their burns. This dried, life-saving plasma that looked like brown sugar, came in bottles to which we added 100 cc's of fluid instead of the usual 400 cc's. Then, as the bottle had to be shaken vigorously for some time to dissolve the plasma, it was not uncommon to see a nurse shaking the bottle with one hand and carrying out another procedure with the other hand.

In September 1996 when Bill, an ex-Basingstoke patient and his wife came from Ottawa to see me, I was a bit apprehensive about the visit, afraid that we would sit around with wooden faces trying to make conversation. My fear didn't materialize—we had a great visit. We laughed and talked about the good and bad things of those days which included the jokes the patients played on the nurses with great glee.

During my time at Basingstoke and later on, I felt that in spite of our efforts, long working days and nights, our patients often received less than minimum care. However, when I mentioned this to Bill he was astonished. He insisted that Basingstoke was the best hospital he had ever been in. He said "It was warm and safe like being in a cocoon". I thought about this and remembered that Basingstoke Hospital had been unusual. The medical director, the matron and assistant matron set the tone and general attitudes of the place: "to the best of our ability the patient's well-being must always come first". I know that this is the philosophy of all hospitals but it is the only hospital I've worked in where it was practised to such a high degree.

Here in 1944 and 1945 in the Basingstoke Hospital lay the boys and men of my generation, mostly teenagers and men in their early twenties. How they coped so courageously with their terrible injuries and what they had endured prior to being wounded I don't know. In his book All Quiet on the Western Front, a World War I

SAVE THESE DATES!

Saturday, March 8, 2-4 pm Special Program Meeting, The Teaching of Nursing History, Student Nurses' Residence, VGH, Vancouver, B.C.

Thursday, April 10, 9-10:30 am Continental Breakfast and History of Nursing Annual Meeting, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Vancouver, B.C.

Thursday, June 12 - Sunday, June 15, International History of Nursing Conference, St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, B.C.

**HISTORY OF NURSING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GROUP OF
THE REGISTERED NURSES ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

The History of Nursing Professional Practice Group provides a forum for those interested in the history of nursing to exchange ideas and information. The Group, formed in 1990, strives to stimulate interest in history of nursing and promotes study of and research into history of nursing in British Columbia. The Group also encourages the teaching of nursing history in educational programs and can assist in the preservation of historical nursing materials.



Membership categories are honorary, full, affiliate and student. If you would be interested in joining us, please get in touch with any member of the executive. Full (voting) Members must be paid-up practicing or non-practicing members of RNABC. Non-nurses may join as Affiliate Members. Student Members must be enrolled in a nursing education program or be Registered Nurses enrolled in a graduate program.

Dues for 1997 are: Full and Affiliate \$20; Students \$5. Membership year is January 1 to December 31. Send name, address, telephone number, and RNABC registration number or name of the educational program. Make cheques to "History of Nursing Group" and send to: Anne Karl, Membership Coordinator, #1-2880 West 33rd Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V2C 1N7.

THE HISTORY GROUP'S NEWSLETTER

The History of Nursing News is published irregularly four times a year by the History of Nursing Professional Practice Group of the Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia. Unsolicited material is welcome, but the Editor reserves the right to shorten, reject, or edit materials in consultation with the author(s). APA style preferred. Editor Beth Fitzpatrick, Box 444, Brackendale, B.C. V0N 1H0 1-604-898-3156

E-mail address: fitzpat@mountain-inter.net

IT'S MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME!!

January, 1997

Dear History of Nursing Member:

According to the Freedom of Information and Protection and Privacy Act, groups such as ours which maintain membership lists must "protect personal information by making reasonable security arrangements against such risks as unauthorized access, collection, use, disclosure or disposal". (part 3, Protection of privacy, #30—Protection of Personal Information)

Therefore, please make the appropriate choices as to whether or not you want your mailing address, telephone number(s), fax number(s), and E-mail address published in the membership list that is sent to all members.

If you are an "early bird" and have already sent in your renewal, please take a few minutes to fill out the renewal form on the next page so that we have the most up-to-date information.

Sincerely

Anne S. Karl

Membership Chair

**TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP PLEASE TURN THE
PAGE**



Don Ransom, Treasurer
#107-9310 King George Highway
Surrey, B.C. V3V 5W3

NEW NURSING HISTORY NOTE CARDS AVAILABLE!!

January, 1997

Dear History of Nursing Member

We are pleased to announce publication of a new nursing history note card. The card features a stained glass window in Christ Church Cathedral, Burrard at Georgia, Vancouver, B.C.

This nurse window was designed and funded by Major J. Mathews, City Archivist, as a memorial to his wife Emily, and as a tribute to the nursing profession. Emily, a 1902 graduate of Vancouver General Hospital, was a nursing sister during World War 1. The Canadian Nurses Association met in Vancouver in 1950 and attended the unveiling of the window.

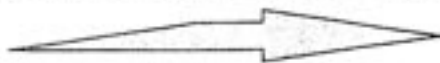
The card commemorates the **History of Nursing International Conference** to be held in Vancouver in June of 1997 at the historic St. Paul's Hospital, and the interdenominational evensong at Christ Church Cathedral.

For more information about the cards please contact Nina Rumen (733-7529) or Ethel Warbinek (538-5066).

Sincerely,
Nina Rumen

Treasurer
International Conference Committee

**TO ORDER YOUR NOTE CARDS PLEASE TURN
THE PAGE**



**B.C. HISTORY OF NURSING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
GROUP
NURSING HISTORY NOTE CARDS ORDER FORM**

INFORMATION ABOUT THE NURSING HISTORY NOTE CARDS

We now have two types of note cards—the Memorial Church card and the new Christ Church card. The Christ Church card can be ordered plain or inscribed with "Season's Greetings".

Each package contains 8 cards plus envelopes. Cost is \$10.00 plus postage. Large numbers of cards are available at a discount (100 cards—less 10%, 200 cards—less 20%, 300 cards—less 30%).

An invoice will be sent with your order. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Send order form to:

B.C. History of Nursing Professional Practice Group
RNABC 2855 Arbutus Street Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3Y8

ORDER FORM

Which note card do you wish to order?

#1 Memorial Church Card.....

#2 Christ Church Card

plain.....

inscribed with Season's Greetings.....

How many packages of note cards are you ordering?

#1 Memorial Church Card.....

#2 Christ Church Card

plain.....

inscribed with Season's Greetings.....

Please mail the note cards and invoice to:

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