

◆ HISTORY OF NURSING NEWS ◆

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From the President's Pen

I am writing this on November 12 and reflecting on the Memorial Day ceremony I attended yesterday at the University of British Columbia Memorial Gym. I had the privilege of speaking to the audience about the proud history of Canada's military nurses. The pageantry of the red-coated Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Scottish piper, the academic regalia and the veterans with their chests of medals brought a special feeling to the ceremony.

Following my talk, several veterans came to me to share their memories of nursing sisters during World War II. One said that he was chosen to teach the nurses how to march and to salute and that they learned well. Another said he had been in Basingstoke Hospital in August of 1944 and had been one of the first to receive penicillin. One said that he had had to fly nurses on air evacuation missions and that no matter how rough the terrain or bumpy the ride, the nurses never



HOLIDAY GREETINGS

blanched. Many others said how they did not realize the special role that nurses played and they were happy to hear about the nurse memorials.

Our History Group launched the display case in the RNABC Board Room on October 16 with the Executive Committee, Pat Cutshall, Rob Calkin, senior RNABC staff and some history group members in attendance. Short speeches, laughter, champagne and photographs marked the occasion.

Prior to November 11, the Archives Committee changed the display to recognize Canada's military nurses. Many thanks to the Archives Committee for their hard work, imagination and dedication. (Editor's note: See photograph in *Nursing B.C.*, November-December issue, page 25.)

On October 31 a program meeting was hosted by

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Kelly Ablog-Morrant, nurse educator for the B.C. Lung Association, and took place at their heritage building on Oak Street. *Ethel Warbinek* lead a panel of *Esther Paulson* and *Joan Doree* who spoke vividly of their experiences in tuberculosis nursing. It was a stimulating presentation in a wonderful setting. Thanks to *Nina Rummen* our capable organizer. Watch for a detailed write-up in the next issue of the newsletter.

The Leader's Conference (Chapter and PPG Presidents) and the Board meeting are coming up on November 20 and 21. The History Group will be preparing two display boards and providing information on the History Group and the plans for an archives by the year 2012.

Thank you all for the great support you have provided. All the Executive values your participation so very much and from all of us best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and for health and happiness in the New Year.

Helen Shore, President

A Trip To Remember

Restoration of a tiny interdenominational church nestled among the massive new towers of the Greater Victoria Hospital site is the ambitious goal of the **Royal Jubilee Hospital (RJH) School of Nursing Alumnae Association**. The Association hosted an exhilarating visit for 10 members of the History of Nursing Group to the restoration site on September 30, 1998. The tour was part of the Group's day-long visit to RJH, which now is the main site of the reorganized Greater Victoria Hospitals. The day also included lunch in the hospital's new cafeteria and a display of artifacts and tour of the RJH Archives

situated in Begbie Hall, the old RJH School of Nursing building (opened in 1930).

Pemberton Memorial Chapel

Barbara Owen, president of the RJH Alumnae, led the tour of the tiny Pemberton Memorial Chapel. The chapel, which was built in 1909 by the Pemberton family, served as a tiny oasis of peace in the midst of the bustling hospital until just a few years ago when the structures joining it to the main building were dismantled. The tiny church had a long association with the RJH Nursing School until the School closed in 1982, and many of its graduates were married there.

Darrell Campbell, of Paul Merrick Architects, who is in charges of the plans, described the scope of the project for the HoN Group and, during lunch, displayed architectural drawings and models. The walls and supports of the well-built brick structure need to be restored and reinforced to meet modern building codes. As well, the Association plans to convert the basement into a properly designed archives and museum to preserve, protect, and display nursing archival materials. Cost for the project is estimated at \$485,000 and the RJH Alumnae have already raised \$91,000.

Mrs. Owen said the ultimate goal is to see completion of the project by May 2001. At the time, 110 years from the opening of the School in 1891, the RJH Alumnae plans the last scheduled reunion of its Alumnae.

The tiny church, which would seat about 100 people, has lovely stained

glass windows throughout, including two large, beautiful, round stained glass windows at each end, called "rose windows." As well, the hospital has ensured that an exceptionally beautiful stained glass honoring nurses, from one of the previously demolished buildings, will be used in the glass hallway that will link the chapel with one of the main buildings. The restored chapel will be open to staff and patients and families, as well as used by the RJH Alumnae archives.

Begbie Hall

Following lunch, the Group members visited the current RJH archives rooms, which are located in Begbie Hall. This well-preserved, historic nurses' residence has recently been designated an historic site by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. *Sheila Zerr*, executive member of the B.C. HoN Group and a graduate of RJH, had been instrumental in promoting Begbie Hall as one of five special sites recently recognized by the Board.

Because of its special designation, the former nurses' residence will be protected and preserved. The building is in fairly good condition and is used by the Hospital administration for various functions. A special plaque will be presented by the Board and assistance given for its preservation and use.

The Vancouver visitors also observed a special display of RJH artifacts and records set out for this visit. The RJH Alumnae has a well organized collection and members of the Alumnae under

Archives Chair *Betty Chater* are currently cataloguing all the School's records.

A Special Day

The special visit was organized by RJH Alumnae president *Barbara Owen* and HoN member *Kari Moore* of Victoria and *Sheila Zerr*. An executive meeting was held on the ferry going to Victoria and the nine Vancouver members also had time on the ferry rides to work on several other projects. Included among the Vancouver members making the visit was new member *Elsie MacDonald*, who for many years nursed in Canada's north.

Submitted by Glennis Zilm

Canadian Association For The History Of Nursing Conference

The 1998 Canadian Association for the History of Nursing (CAHN) meeting established an historical precedence. CAHN met in conjunction with the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine at the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities (Learneds), University of Ottawa, May 29-31 1998. Nursing and Medical history papers were shared followed by joint discussions around our various research approaches.

Two of the papers provide an example of the different research focus, *Bob Jackson* (University of Ottawa) presented "What's the Best Way to Classify Skin Diseases: A Historical Perspective" followed by *Judith Young* (retired University of Toronto) "Letters from the Western Frontier 1900-1920: Women's Child Bearing and Child Rearing Experience". The quality of the nursing historical research

stood proud as was evident when *Joyce MacQueen* (retired Laurentian University) presented her paper "Treating Venereal Diseases in an Ontario Mining Center 1932-1944".

The conference keynote by *Susan Reverby* "Whose Clinical Trial? The Public Health Service, Tuskegee and Nurse Rivers' Dilemma" was the conference outstanding feature. *Reverby's* research suggests nurse Rivers was the critical go-between between black men and the United States Public Service venereal disease research project. She cared for the men and she worked against all odds to advocate for them. This paper will be published in the *Nursing History Review* in the fall. Don't miss it. Once the paper is published the B.C. history group should plan a program to review this work. It would be interesting to rent the film "Miss Ever's Boys" and compare *Riverby's* historical interpretation with the Hollywood version.

Another standout paper was given by *Kathryn McPherson* (York University) "Working With Whiteness: Canadian Nurses and Racial Identity 1920-1940". She explored the image of "whiteness" in nursing: for example, the selection of nursing students, nursing staff and uniform image. You can imagine how much I enjoyed this paper. My wildest dream would be to do Ph.D studies with *Kathryn* at York and pursue the significance of nursing costumes.

Socializing was limited to the events planned for the *Learns* conference. I enjoyed the publisher's exhibits with companies, books and multimedia materials from around the world. The historical offerings

were mind boggling. The Canadian College of Physicians and Surgeons entertained our group one afternoon. The former Monastery of the Precious Blood is their quarters and archives, a classic magnificent building which has been renovated to house the college offices, library and archives. The papers were delivered in the former chapel. As I looked up to the magnificent stained glass windows I could feel the spirits of the cloistered, praying nuns.

My best moment came when 12 or so nurses, physicians and spouses shared pizza at one of my University of Ottawa haunts. We enjoyed the best pizza in town while we picked *Susan Reverby* (and other's) brains about historical interests.

Finally, the moment of triumph when I handed over \$5400 of conference profits to the CAHN executive at the Annual General Meeting. *Helen Niskala* was there to share our pride as members of the B.C. History Group. It is on to Alberta next year.

Submitted by Sheila Zerr



Book Reviews

Thuillier, Daphne: A CENTURY OF CARING: The Story of Vernon Jubilee Hospital and of Men and Women Who Have Made Its History. 1997. Vernon Jubilee Hospital, Vernon, BC

Residents of B.C.'s Okanagan Valley, and of Vernon in particular will no doubt appreciate this detailed and thoroughly researched historical overview of Vernon Jubilee Hospital (VJH) and its one hundred years of caring. The author, a former VJH board member, has put together a compendium of the involved historical figures (close to 650 individuals are listed in the index) and of the issues which shaped its growth.

The historical information is laid out in decades, one to each chapter, and is enhanced by numerous black and white photos and several appendices. The amount of material is impressive and the writer keeps your interest.

Various issues are described in depth in each decade, ranging from the earliest financial concerns, which continue, to the pro-choice, pro-life disagreements of the eighties, which also continue. Nurses and nursing issues are well represented throughout the book. The "Training School", which commenced in 1902 and closed in 1931, in particular, has an oral history, pictures and memorabilia to catch our imagination. Interestingly, the almost twenty-five years of clinical experience at VJH enjoyed by college nursing students as part of their nursing education, and which is ongoing today, is not mentioned. However, it is fair to say that an enormous

amount of wide-ranging information is included in a very readable fashion.

One critical question is raised to do with the index and its usefulness when searching for certain material, for example, the original training school, and its nursing education program, or for the duties of graduate staff who provided early nursing care. Issues and topics are not listed in the index; only proper names are included. This necessitates searching page by page for specific material, which when found proves to be of great interest.

For those involved in the VJH century of caring, the book should prove of keen interest, and is an important historical document for the city of Vernon.

Submitted by Jill Thompson

Edwards-Rees, Desiree: THE STORY OF NURSING. 1965. Constable Young Books Ltd. London.

Tucked away in the far reaches of the Fraser Valley Regional Library system is a small gem of a book (92 pages) titled "The Story of Nursing" by an English educator and historian, *Desiree Edwards-Rees*. Published in London in 1965, this short work in the first four of its eight chapters provides a fascinating and efficient overview of the times, events and people who influenced the how and why of nursing's earliest history as an emerging profession.

Although primarily descriptive of western European civilization, it does touch upon Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete, India, China, Japan and the Americas regarding the evolution of nursing care.

In addition, in order to provide context, the emergence of medicine and medical care, and of hospitals, is highlighted to better explain the presence of nurses and nursing care - or their absence!

The author provides cameos of nursing's favorite historical figures from *Fabiola, Paula, St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, the Poor Clares* and the *Beguines* (to name only a few) all the way to *Elizabeth Fry, Dorothea Dix* and *Jeanne Mance*.

The influence of *Florence Nightingale* occupies two chapters and is interesting to read in light of more current critiques of this fascinating individual - it stands up well. It's all there - the character, beliefs, vision, the family and colleagues, even pets of *Nightingale* - all noted. And yes, *Nightingale's* opposition to state registration and to germ theory is not neglected but is briefly described.

The shaping of professional nursing in the U.K. is the theme of the end chapters that mainly feature public health and visiting nursing. Finally, the W.H.O., the International Red Cross, the I.C.N., St. John Ambulance Brigade and other developments up to the Second World War are discussed in the concluding chapter. The bibliography lists the classic, expected and familiar authors.

For students or graduates interested in nursing history, this small book neatly encapsulates its development and therefore sheds light on part of Canada's own historical nursing origins, at least those rooted in western / European background.

Submitted by Jill Thompson

Warbinek, Ethel and Fitzpatrick, Beth
 RICHMOND-DELTA CHAPTER HISTORY 1967-1997 THIRTY YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH. 1997
Richmond-Delta Chapter, Richmond, B.C.

The Richmond-Delta Chapter of the Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia (RNABC) has been richly blessed with a colorful history guided by the many talented registered nurses living and working in the area. To commemorate the first thirty years, *Ethel Warbinek* and *Beth Fitzpatrick*, both active Chapter members, volunteered their time and expertise to record the history using a variety of sources such as Chapter and RNABC archives and RNABC publications.

The book is logically organized so that the reader can become familiar with the history of Richmond, Delta, and Ladner before learning of the development of the health services. The brief history of the RNABC provides the background from which the Chapter evolved. Of particular interest is the record of the early nursing leaders who played such a pivotal role in the development of the Chapter.

The steps taken to create the Chapter in 1967 as the Gulf of Georgia, later Richmond-Delta, reflects this group's creative spirit. Guided by the dedicated leaders, the members have represented the concerns of nurses in a variety of settings by organizing and delivering

thoughtful presentations. Also described is the vast array of educational offerings and the recognition awards presented at the Chapter and provincial levels. The Chapter's visibility in the region is described in the section noting the Nursing Week activities, the community education events, and the creation of bursaries for secondary school students entering nursing programs.

As the unified voice of the 2,500 nurses in the Richmond-Delta area, the Chapter has a rich history to draw upon to face the many challenges ahead. What a unique record, complete with pictures and momentos, these authors have provided to the nurses of the future!

Submitted by Kathy Murphy

Historic Photograph Donated to RNABC

A framed photograph of historical interest to the RNABC has been donated by *Esther Paulson* on behalf of the History of Nursing Professional Practice Group.

The event is the dinner at the then "new" Georgia Hotel in Vancouver, B.C. in May of 1937 to commemorate the **25th Anniversary of the RNABC** formed in 1912.

Grace Fairley, President and *Helen Randal* are standing with invited guests from the B.C. Medical Association and registered nurse members prominent in that era. They are identified by name on the panel below

the photograph as are registered nurses seated at tables in the foreground.

The Georgia Hotel, now 60 years later is being restored to its original splendor.

The Editor's Greetings.....

It's not too late to order **History of Nursing note cards**. They make wonderful Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers! And there are still a few limited Edition prints by *Jo Scott B.* available for that special person on your Christmas list. (Please see the enclosed order form for ordering information and prices.)

The 1999 Membership List, prepared by *Jill Thompson*, is included in this mailing. Please welcome two new members and add their addresses to your brochure:

C. Elsie MacDonald
1775 McSpadden Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C. V5N 1L3
604-255-5197
Carla Paterson
13960 66 Ave.,
Surrey, B.C. V3W 9B1
604-590-1516

The winter newsletter (due out in January, 1999) will have more book reviews, a listing of interesting web sites, and a photo page of highlights from the Victoria trip and more. Until then, I'm wishing you an Old-Fashioned Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

February 6, 1999 Ethel Johns Research Day, St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, B.C.

June 18-20, 1999 Canadian Association for the History of Nursing 12th Annual Conference, Edmonton, Alberta

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 1998 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 checks to "History of Nursing Group" and send to: Don Ransom, Treasurer, #107-9310 King George Highway, Surrey, B.C. V3V 5W3

THE HISTORY GROUP'S NEWSLETTER

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