

# HISTORY OF NURSING NEWS

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## SPECIAL MEMORIAL NURSING PORTRAIT COLLECTION ISSUE 1999

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The Memorial Nursing Portrait Collection of the British Columbia History of Nursing Group has grown significantly since its inception and now contains a base collection of eighteen sponsored portraits. The collection has been featured in several past issues of the History of Nursing News, the last being in 1994 where the first nine portraits were profiled.

This collection provides an opportunity for individuals to contribute \$500 to the History of Nursing Scholarship Fund and provide a special tribute to a friend or family member. A memorial portrait consists of a individually designed, handcrafted, miniature porcelain doll, a framed photo, and an inscribed plaque. The collection is housed in glass cabinets and displayed by the History Group at nursing and/or public functions and for educational sessions.

The purpose is twofold: first, to raise moneys for the History of Nursing Scholarship Fund and second, to provide a visual, lasting tribute to a friend or family member or a special nursing project. A portrait can be sponsored by anyone and can be a tribute to a person living or dead or to a project of choice, but the memorial portrait must honor a nurse or nursing history event.

Sponsors wishing to add a portrait to the collection, select the costume design. Corporate or individual sponsors receive a tax receipt for a charitable donation that may be used on their income tax return. Donations of any amount can be made to the scholarship fund, but a minimum donation of \$500 is needed to sponsor a memorial nursing portrait into the collection.

Guest editor for this Special Issue is Sheila Zerr with production by Beth Fitzpatrick. We hope that our readers will enjoy these glimpses of nursing history and tributes to family members and friends. Unfortunately reproduced photographs of the miniatures do not do justice to their exquisite beauty, attention to detail and masterful craftsmanship. They must be seen to be truly appreciated!

Portrait # 10 of Countess Ishbel Aberdeen honors *Josephine Dyer Rankin*, pictured below, who was born September 15, 1913 in Gurebridge Scotland. The portrait's sponsor is Sheila Zerr.

*Josephine* lost her parents in the 1915 flu epidemic, was adopted by the Whitson family and brought to Canada in 1926. Her family settled in the Fraser Valley where *Josephine* continued her schooling and helped on the family farm in Matsqui.

In 1930 she set out by boat for employment in Powell River. Eventually most of her family would join her in this mill town where employment was available during the depression years. She met and married James Rankin in 1933. She lived in Powell River from 1930 to 1992.

*Josephine* devoted her life to her husband and five daughters. A son died at birth and she lost a daughter named Joy. Her life revolved around her family, her church and her husband's job at the company paper mill. Her 11 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren shared her love and devotion.



Countess Ishbel Aberdeen, wife of the Governor General of Canada from 1894 to 1898, conceived the idea of visiting nurse service when she was helping to organize the Vancouver Local Council of Women in 1869. They told her of the hardships suffered by sick women and children in isolated settlements on the prairies and in western Canada and urged her to use her influence in bringing them help. The idea of the cottage hospital had been suggested to her on an earlier visit to Kaslo on Kootenay Lake in 1895. The Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) had its motherhouse in Rideau Hall. Services began in 1898. Four nurses were sent to the Klondike Trail. The VON services and cottage hospitals grew to a nation-wide service.



Portrait # 11 of a Sister of Providence honors *Katherine Yarko Rumen*, pictured below, who was born December 7, 1904 in Dawid Gorojok, Russia. The portrait is sponsored by Nina Rumen.

*Katherine's* mother died of typhoid fever in 1922 and her father died of cancer in 1936. Her father was a lumber merchant, and well off, which meant *Katherine* had the privilege of attending school.

At age 21 *Katherine* married Sam Rumen, a Russian living in Poland. Using *Katherine's* dowry, Sam immigrated to Canada. By the year 1930, after working 2 years, Sam was able to send for *Katherine* and daughter Nina. The family settled on a farm in Jaffray.

*Katherine* and Sam had 5 daughters. They lost Lydia in 1926 at 5 months of age. Life in Canada was difficult during the 1930 depression years. The family moved to Fernie in 1941 when Nina began high school and when Sam got a job with Canadian Pacific Rail.

*Katherine* never worked outside the home. She devoted her life to her family and friends. She lived 53 years in her home on Third Avenue in Fernie. She enjoyed her 8 grandchildren.

Sam died in 1981 and *Katherine* passed away in 1994.



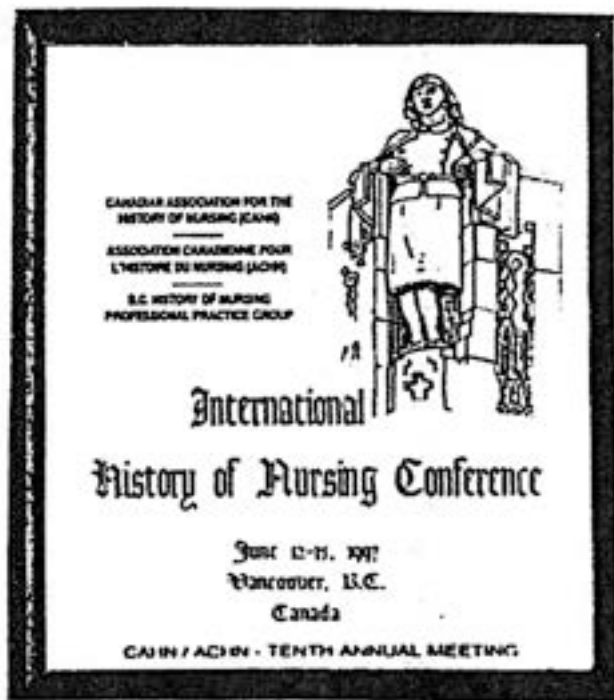
The Sisters of Providence had their roots in Montreal and the work of Emilie Tavernier-Camelin who founded the Sisters of Charity, later called the Sisters of Providence. They opened St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver in 1894, naming it in honor of Paul Durieu, the bishop who invited them to Vancouver. They built a 25 bed 4 story wood structure designed by one of the Sisters. The hospital was financed by "begging tours". The Sisters would solicit \$10 a year from workers for the guarantee of care at St. Paul's. In 1907 the School of Nursing opened. A century later the hospital continues to offer expert care and multiple services to the citizens of Vancouver.



Portrait # 12 of a Lay Nurse of the 1720's Acadian Court, Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, honors the *International History of Nursing Conference* held in Vancouver B.C. in 1997. The portrait's sponsor is Nina Rumén.

The *International History of Nursing Conference* was co-sponsored by the B.C. History Group and the Canadian Association for the History of Nursing. One hundred and sixty participants gathered from around the world to share historical nursing history papers, panels, posters and historical exhibits. The conference closed with an interfaith church service. The conference social highlight was a grand dinner that featured a parade, led by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with nurses in international costumes and historical nursing attire.

A limited edition print was created by artist Jo Scott-B for the *International History of Nursing Conference*. It depicts a Rhea Sister World War II nurse (seen below) on the Georgia Medical Dental Building in Vancouver.



Acadia is the original name of the region of Canada now known as Nova Scotia. The region was first colonized by the French in 1604. The area changed hands with the French and British conflicts over the years. In 1775 the British colonial authorities removed the Acadians from their land and dispersed them among the other British colonies in America.

Louisbourg stands as an example of the glory of Acadia. The French founded Louisbourg as the capital of the colony called Ile Royale in 1713 with 149 soldiers, fishermen, women and children. Their purpose was to assert French power in the Maritimes. In the governor's luxurious suite, colonial officers and military officers and their wives set the tone of life. Most medical and midwifery needs were met by the women of the colony and court. The design of this 18th century gown is based on a gown worn in the Acadian court of Louisbourg.





Portrait # 13 of Ethel Ruth Flower depicts many facets of nursing history. This portrait is in memory of Archie and Ethel McKenzie and is sponsored by Mary and Melvin Clark.

Archibald, born August 27, 1905 in Pincher Creek Alberta, was the first of four sons of Scottish immigrants Mary (Grieve) and Dugald McKenzie. Archie's childhood and young adulthood were spent in Sapperton, New Westminster, B.C.

Ethel May Jones born in Pontypidd Wales, was the second child and only daughter of Alfred E. and Elizabeth (Bradley) Jones. When seven years old, Ethel immigrated to Canada with her father and two brothers. Her mother remained in Wales to manage the family coal business. Ethel was in her early twenties when she moved to British Columbia.

Archie and Ethel met in Vancouver and were married on August 28, 1929. Their first child, A. Gordon arrived in 1933. The depression sent them to Powell River where Archie found work as a sawyer with the Powell River Pulp and Paper Company. A daughter Mary Elizabeth and a son Allan Thomas completed the family.

With the advent of WW II in 1939, Archie volunteered and was posted overseas at the rank of Sargent with the Canadian Army Forestry Corps. Archie was honorably discharged at the end of the war and returned home in December 1945 to a very busy household. Ethel had not only managed the family but had opened her own ladies apparel store "The Corner Shoppe". Mary had begun piano lessons with Mrs. Ethel MacGregor (nee Flower) and the boys were involved in the Boy Scouts of Canada.

The McKenzies lived and worked in Powell River until their deaths, Ethel on January 25, 1967 and Archie on June 23, 1986. Archie was predeceased by his eldest son Gordon in 1981. Their family and friends fondly remember Ethel's entrepreneurial spirit and involvement in The Order of the Eastern Star, and Archie's civic contributions in Powell River.





Ethel Ruth Flower was born in England in 1887, orphaned in Vancouver at age 6, she was raised by Sister Francis. Her strict religious life at Saint Luke's Home included ballet and piano lessons. She remembered Sister Francis nicking her with a knitting needle if she did not hold her hands in proper position. She graduated from the Vancouver General Hospital School of Nursing in 1920.



She served with the Columbia Coasts Missions in Rocky Bay in the 1920's. Missionaries of various denominations had plied the B.C. coast from the mid-1800's. They focused on providing spiritual care first with practical service, education and supplies second. From 1904 to the mid-1970's, the Anglican Mission set up hospitals in remote coast villages, and sent out ships in all kinds of weather, delivering medical care and nonsectarian spiritual support. This included logging camps, native villages and white settlements along 20,000 square miles of coastline. John Antle, who founded the Columbia Coast Mission Ships, was a devout and practical Christian. Ethel Flower's great admiration for John Antle influenced her decision to go to the Rock Bay Mission Hospital upon completing her nurses training.

She met and married Canada's most decorated WW II hero, Jock MacGregor in 1923 while working in Prince

Rupert. The MacGregors settled in Powell River where they raised two boys, Jamie and Don. Ethel was well known as a music teacher. She guided numerous students through piano lessons, exams, concerts and festivals. She is remembered fondly for her musical guidance which included nicks to the fingers with a knitting needle to encourage proper finger positions.

Portrait # 14 of the Royal Jubilee Hospital School of Nursing student uniform (1951) is in memory of *Thurley Mary Duck* and is sponsored by Helen Niskala and friends.

*Thurley Mary Duck*, age 68, passed away on September 26, 1997 at the Cowichan District Hospital in Duncan B.C. She graduated from the Royal Jubilee Hospital School of Nursing in 1951. She completed post-graduate work in psychiatric nursing at Allen Memorial Institute in Montreal and earned her B.N. degree at McGill University.

During her nursing career, *Thurley* held several positions at the Vancouver General Hospital: Assistant Supervisor, Centennial Pavilion, Building Supervisor, Heather Pavilion and Director of Nursing Administration. After serving several years as an RNABC Board member and Vice-President, she became the twenty-fourth President of the RNABC.



The Royal Jubilee Hospital School of Nursing opened its doors in 1891, during Queen Victoria's reign and remained in operation until 1982. Over 3,000 nurses took the Royal Jubilee training. The graduating nurses went on to many jobs and places. Some became missionaries, many served during WW I and WW II, and others pioneered as public health nurses in northern B.C. Graduates have served on the Canadian Nurses Association and in the World Health Organization and have provided leadership in nursing education. All the graduates followed the school motto "*Uno Amino*", the oneness of mind, in giving the best of themselves in the service of others.





Portrait # 15 of a Northern Nurse and Mountie, is in memory of Alice Smith and is sponsored by Sheila Zerr.

Alice Smith was a major force behind the development of Canada's northern health services. She was the first Chief Nursing Consultant with Indian Health Services (later Indian and Northern Affairs and still later the Medical Services Branch of Health and Welfare Canada).

Born in Cartwright, Manitoba in 1910, she graduated from the Winnipeg General Hospital, received a baccalaureate from Columbia in 1950 and a masters from Yale in 1957. In 1948 she was asked by the Canadian Nurses Association to go to Great Britain to study the effects on nursing of that country's new national health insurance plan.

In her 25 years with the federal government, during which she achieved increasing influence as Chief Nursing Consultant, she initiated continuous refinements in the medical services under her influence. She helped implement improvements in health care for the Indian and Inuit people and she initiated many practical ways for northern nurses to upgrade and improve their credentials and practice.

For her services and her work in providing university students with northern nursing experience, she received an honorary doctorate from the University of Ottawa in 1975. Alice died in White Rock, B.C. in 1998.

Nursing in Canada's north demands bold courage and heroism. It also brings disappointments, but in the end will challenge the nurse to innovative, independent nursing practice. Northern nurses continue to demonstrate advanced knowledge and skill as well as leadership in demonstrating primary health care principles in action.

Nurses in the north work toward empowering native groups to take responsibility for their own health. Leaders and dedicated nurses continue toward recognition of the unique contribution of northern nurses. Currently they are striving to establish northern nursing as a certified specialty.



Portrait # 16 of a Student Uniform from the Jackson City Hospital (Jackson, Michigan) is in memory of *Odessa (Dolly) P. Shore* and sponsored by Helen Shore.

*Odessa* was born on October 6, 1888 in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. She grew up and went to school in Saginaw, Michigan. *Odessa* entered the Jackson City Hospital of Nursing in Jackson, Michigan where she graduated as a nurse in 1910. It was at the Jackson City Hospital she met her future husband, Dr. A.E. Shore, who graduated in medicine from the University of Western Ontario. He had gone to Jackson because he would be paid \$25 a month as an intern. They were married on June 6, 1911 in Calgary, Alberta by the Reverend Henry Shore, Dr. Shore's brother. The couple moved to Bowden, Alberta and later to Alix, Alberta because this town had a phone line.



They both served overseas in WW I and on their return moved to Calgary, Alberta. Dr. Shore took his specialization in eye, ear, nose, and throat in Chicago and Manhattan. *Odessa* became a talented china painter, needle woman, an accomplished club woman, and hostess. They had one daughter, Helen Louise who became a nurse. *Odessa "Dolly" Shore* died on September 23, 1972 and is buried in Calgary.



*Odessa* was a courageous and resourceful woman and nurse. She assisted with her husband's medical practice in rural Alberta, first in Bowden and later in Alix. This pioneering couple managed a medical



and nursing practice, ran a small drugstore and *Odessa* looked after patients in the second floor of their home. Dr. Shore traveled to visit his country patients by horse and buggy, by railroad handcar, and later he was the proud owner of a Maxwell car that was used in good weather. Country roads were too frequently mired in mud and impassible.

*Odessa's* role was one of nurse practitioner and physician assistant. She acted as assistant to the surgeon by administering ether as an anesthetic during surgeries at the same time worrying about fire from the kerosene lamps. She provided patient information to patients throughout all age ranges with a vast array of medical conditions. She provided patient care to those admitted to their second floor hospital beds. She always worried about prairie "desperados" known to roam the prairies at that time. She worried that they would try to hold up the drugstore for money or drugs. On the advice of the local police officer, she obtained a revolver, and prided herself on being a "good shot".



Portrait # 17 of the Ship Boy and Naval Sick Berth Attendant is in memory of *Luella Catherine (Entwisle) Zilm* and is sponsored by Glennis Zilm and friends.

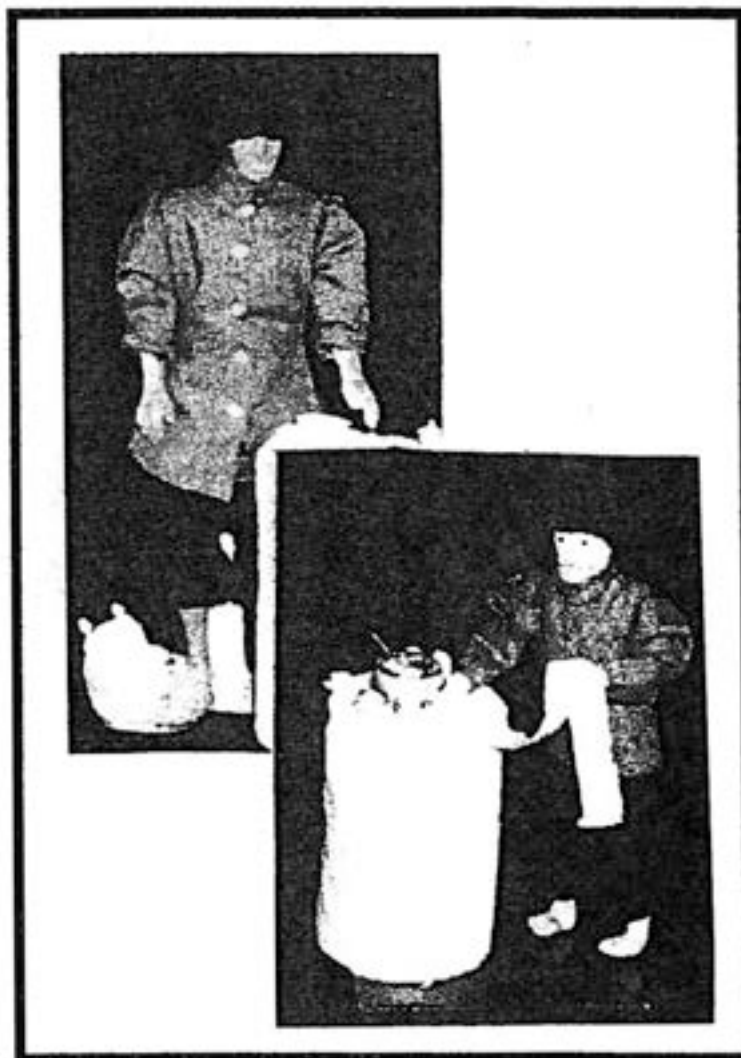


*Luella* was born June 30, 1911 near Parkman, Saskatchewan. She was one of a large, close, happy family and lived all her early life in Parkman. Following her school years, her twin sister Ida entered nursing, and Lou took over the management of a store. In 1933, she married Dwight Meritt Zilm of Wawota and in 1937 moved with him to New Westminster, B.C. and later to Haney, where they raised a family of two daughters. Widowed in 1960, she continued to manage the family business affairs and remained the focal point for her family. She spent

her retirement years in Crescent Beach and White Rock, B.C., close to her family, and enjoyed the company of a wide circle of friends. She died December 26, 1998.

*Luella* is survived by daughters Glennis Zilm and Valerie Chapman, son-in-law Keith Chapman, and grandsons Blair (BJ) and Brett.

British Columbia's first known nursing took place circa 1840.



Adherence to military law brought health care to early Victoria. The laws stated that if a mariner fell sick or became incapable of working, the Master is to put him ashore and lodgings are to be sought. One of the ship boys was to tend him.

Historical records show that buildings were erected in the Naval yard, Esquimalt, in 1885, to accommodate expected wounded from British Naval engagement with the Russians. No wounded were treated but the huts erected, known as the Crimean Huts became part of the early health care in British Columbia.

The ship boy served the sick until 1833. Then the role of sick berth attendant was established

with ranks, rules and regulations. The sick berth attendant ranks meant older experienced men attended the sick.

Portrait # 18 of an 1891 Royal Jubilee Hospital Student Uniform, honors Sheila J. Rankin Zerr in tribute to Josephine Rankin. The portrait was sponsored by Sheila Zerr, Mary Clark and friends.

In 1999 Sheila was presented with the prestigious RNABC Award of Distinction. The following tribute, edited due to space constraints, was read during the ceremonies.

"If you want to get an idea across, wrap it up as a person. If that person is Sheila Rankin Zerr you'll get a remarkable educator, administrator, advocate, accomplished author, as well as an exceptional clinician, counselor and researcher.

Sheila's ideas have been at the forefront of many significant developments in nursing throughout a long and distinguished career. For the past 15 years, her main career has been as a nurse educator. She was also instrumental in having nursing history become an integral part of the basic nursing curriculum.

It is her passion for nursing in its historical context which has led to some of Sheila's unique contributions to nursing in B.C. She is a founding member of the RNABC's History of Nursing Professional Practice Group and has served on the executive since its inception. One of her major contributions to nursing in B.C. has been establishing the RNABC oral history collection – 150 audio tapes of nurses in B.C. who have made a significant contribution to nursing. This collection is widely referenced and regarded as the finest in Canada.

Sheila is also responsible for creating the Memorial Portrait Collection, a striking set of historically accurate nursing figurines, which helped raise \$10,000 for the History of Nursing Scholarship Fund, yet another idea which Sheila brought to reality.

Sheila, you are certainly a national treasure. Because of your efforts, we will always remember the remarkable contributions of many nurses to the profession. We're proud to count you among them, and to present you with the RNABC Award of Distinction in Nursing."





The nurse's uniform was established in North America in the early 1870's. In 1873 nurses at the Bellevue Hospital in New York City, wore no distinctive uniform. They wore the traditional nurse costume of a housedress covered by a large apron. The six student nurses in the first class wanted a uniform. They chose a uniform and cap based on the style established by nurses in Britain. The Bellevue Hospital in St. Catherine's Ontario followed suit and in 1875 established the first student nurse uniform in Canada.

The uniform became a badge of honor, a source of great institutional pride and was often associated with professional nursing. When the Royal Jubilee Hospital School of Nursing opened in 1891, the students were required to make their own uniforms, caps, and capes or have them made by a seamstress. By the 1950's, the uniform style had altered in length of the hem and sleeves and in the size of the cape. Students and graduates took enormous pride in their uniform style.

The traditional nurse's uniform of bib, apron, cap, and formal dress survived for 100 years. By the 1970's, the stiff starched white uniform and cap were on the way out. Many felt that the uniform image was a source of servitude and oppression. To-day the professional nurse is judged by her knowledge and expert clinical skills quite apart from the costume and attire worn.

## 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. **Full members** must be paid-up practicing or paid-up non-practicing members of RNABC. Interested individuals not paying RNABC practicing or non-practicing fees may join as **affiliate members**. If you are enrolled in a nursing education program or are a registered nurse enrolled in a graduate program, you may join as a **student member**. Please get in touch with any member of the executive if you are interested in membership.

Dues for 1999 are: Full and Affiliate \$20; Students \$5. Membership year is January 1 to December 31. Send name, address, telephone number, or name of the educational program. Make checks to "History of Nursing Group" and send to: Lois Blais, Treasurer, 4074 West 16th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 3E1.

### THE HISTORY GROUP'S NEWSLETTER

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