

August 2005

Margaret Alleman Centre
for the History of Nursing

NEW LETTER

Feature Article

NURSING HISTORY IN THE FOREFRONT: A REPORT OF RECENT EVENTS IN OTTAWA

Judith Young

Those lucky enough to be in Ottawa from June 14th to the 19th were treated to a series of outstanding events in nursing history. The AMS/Hannah Nursing Conference came first, then the opening of the exhibition, "A Caring Profession" with launch of the book *On All Frontiers*, and finally the annual CAHN/ACHN conference. In between were receptions to announce a new nursing history unit and to celebrate the 100th anniversary of *Canadian Nurse*.

The Hannah 2005 Nursing History Conference, funded by Associated Medical Services, brought together well-established and emerging scholars in the field of Canadian nursing history. Organised by Meryn Stuart and Cynthia Toman of the School of Nursing, University of Ottawa, the conference was subtitled "Identities, Diversity, and Canadian Nursing History" and, within this framework, individual sessions focused on "Place" (the North), "Race," "Religion/Philanthropy," "Nation," and "Training." The approximately 90 attendees joined in some lively discussion following each paper and enjoyed networking during the breaks. An added highlight of the conference was the official announcement of the opening of the AMS Nursing History Research Unit. Funded jointly by AMS/Hannah and the University of Ottawa, and headed by Meryn Stuart, plans for the

unit include an online course, a web journal, and the availability of summer internships.

On the evening of June 16th delegates to both the Hannah and CAHN conferences joined several hundred people, in the magnificent great hall of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, for ceremonies to mark the opening of "**A Caring Profession: Centuries of Nursing in Canada.**"

A highlight of the ceremonies was a well-presented parade of historical nursing costumes which featured, among others, some familiar faces from the BC Nursing History Group. Also launched, was the new book *On All Frontiers: Four Centuries of Canadian Nursing*. Many historians have contributed to the book including several members of the Alleman Centre.

The exhibition is truly on a grand scale. The morning after the opening CAHN conference participants had the opportunity to view the exhibition with museum historian/curator Tina Bates: all were greatly impressed with Tina's accomplishment. At the entrance, the visitor is drawn to replicas of two very lovely stained glass windows, one depicting Jean Mance, the other Florence Nightingale: an earlier survey found these two nursing figures to be the most familiar to the public, hence their prominent place. The circular-shaped exhibition is divided into nine sections "In the Hospital," "In the Home," "In the Community," "On the Frontier," "On Campus and On the Picket Line," and "On the Battlefield." In the centre is a ninth section, "The Nurses' Station," which will be staffed by volunteer nurses and is reserved for interactive presentations and electronic reference materials.

Throughout the exhibition, hundreds of artefacts and historic photos tell the story of nursing in Canada from the early seventeen-

century to the present. As well, there are filmed re-enactments of certain events and interactive elements to engage people of all ages. Many of the items on display are from the Canadian Nursing History Collection (donated by the CNA to the Museum of Civilization, to Library and Archives Canada and to the War Museum); many others are on loan. The exhibition will remain at the Museum of Civilization for 15 months and then; hopefully, sections of it will travel to various parts of the country.

With the tour of the exhibition completed, it was a special privilege to find ourselves in the impressive surroundings of Library and Archives Canada for the CAHN/ACHN conference. The afternoon program started with an informative account, by Archives' personnel, of the extensive nursing collections held at the Library and Archives. Computer images illustrated a few of the thousands of photographs held in the collections. The day's events continued with the AMS/Hannah lecture by Dr. Margaret Sandelowski (University North Carolina School of Nursing). In her talk titled, "Making Matter Mean: The Material World of the Nurse," Dr. Sandelowski encouraged us, as we research and write nursing history, to re-think the relationship of the individual with technology. A banquet at the Novotel Hotel completed the day's events and where, after dinner, we were treated to an entertaining and informative talk by Tina Bates on creating the exhibition, "A Caring Profession." Using many images, Tina demonstrated the complex task of setting up an exhibition of this magnitude, and the great number of people involved.

The remainder of the conference was taken up with a wide range of paper presentations (not forgetting the splendid reception put on by the CNA to acknowledge the 100th anniversary of *Canadian Nurse*). The bulk of the papers covered topics in Canadian nursing history including issues in mental health nursing, early operating room nursing, Red Cross and St Johns Ambulance services, and military nursing. Other papers looked outside Canada

to Dame Cicely Saunders, founder of the British hospice movement, to midwifery and bush nurses in Australia, missionary nursing in China, an early nursing degree course in England, and to Nightingale at Harley Street. With an above average attendance of 70 plus people, energy and momentum was sustained to the final paper of the conference. All together, this was a very auspicious week for nursing history.

Membership Renewal 2005

Have you renewed your membership for 2005? If not, please remember to do so. We rely on member fees to continue the work of the Centre and further the goals.

Share this newsletter with a friend or colleague and encourage them to join.
Check our web site: www.allemang.on.ca

Book Review

Mansell, Diana J. RN PhD. ***Forging the Future: A History of Nursing in Canada***. Ann Arbor, Michigan: A Thomas Press Publication, 2003, 219 pages.

The history of Canadian nursing is presented here in the context of the political, social and economic climate of the time. Mansell analyzes nursing through the experiences of nursing leaders, nurses working in hospitals and in public health, and includes the public's perception of the nurse as expressed in the then popular culture. She raises the thorny questions: "Has the push for professionalization through education on the part of nursing leadership contributed to the crisis in nursing at the beginning of the 21st century? Was the strategy of nursing educators misguided?" As you read these pages, the struggle for nursing autonomy and professionalization seems an endless task that occupied much energy and strife throughout each era.

Chapter one discusses the birth of Canadian nursing 1870 to 1914 strongly influenced by the principles of Nightingale. Mary Agnes Snively was the driving force behind much reform in nursing in this period and nursing became a “noble calling”.

Chapter two deals with World War I and the Spanish Flu Epidemic 1914-1919, a period during which Canadian nurses responded overwhelmingly to the needs at home and overseas. Nursing’s reputation grew in both the care of the sick and in matters of public health concern. Chapter three—the dilemma of the 1920s confirmed the legitimacy of nursing as registration acts were established in all provinces. Two distinct groups emerged: private duty nurses and public health nurses. Mansell points out that the growth and significance of nursing resulted in three formal groups emerging: leaders, bedside nurses and public health nurses giving rise to dissension among the factions and with the medical profession.

Chapter four--weathering the economic storm: the 1930s, this era produced the “Weir Report” of 1932 to support the move to professionalization. However, the depression and severe economic times proved that nurses could not live on devotion to duty and loyalty, Better remuneration was needed. Public health nursing thrived as the health of the community became more important during this period.

Chapter five covers World War II, nurses willingly went to serve and further enhanced their reputation with the public. A shortage of nurses at home prompted the federal government to provide grants to the Canadian Nurses Association in 1942-43 to support education and recruitment of nurses. Relationships between nursing and medicine also improved during this time.

Chapter six on post-war Canada sees the beginning rise of unions for nurses as working conditions and remuneration were slow to

improve. The struggle between professionalization and vocation became more real, and differences among groups stronger. The concluding chapter is followed by an afterword covering 1960 to 2000.

This is a well-researched and documented history of nurses and Mansell should be proud of her accomplishment. It looks at the nursing profession from a variety of perspectives and deepens the knowledge of nursing history. It is invaluable reading for all nurses, whether they be students, practitioners, or retirees.

Health reform

Baranek, Patricia M., Deber, Raisa B., and Williams, Paul D. *Almost Home: Reforming Home and Community Care in Ontario*. University of Toronto Press. 2005, 340 pages.

The shift from hospitals to home-community (enforced by rising costs as much as by philosophy) is fundamentally reshaping Canadian health care policy and politics. In this carefully researched book, the authors analyze five different attempts to reform home and community care in Ontario between 1985 and 1996. Their conclusions have much to say to us in 2005, as the problem of providing the best in health care continues to daunt us. (OHS Bulletin, Issue 150, Summer 2005. Ontario Historical Society)

News Items

Lifetime Achievement Award

The Alumnae Association of the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto awarded their Lifetime Achievement Award to **Dr. Margaret Allemang**, posthumously. The award was accepted by her nephew John Allemang . The award recognizes an individual with outstanding achievements whose noteworthy activity has been

recognized in their field and has contributed to the health system through patient care, basic and clinical research. The recipient demonstrates the highest principles of the profession and serves as a role model for current and future health care professionals.

(Excerpted from Vital Connections, Summer 2005. Published bi-annually by the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto).

New Dean appointed

Dr, Sioban Nelson has been appointed as the Dean, Faculty of Nursing, U of T and will join the Faculty in November 2005. She is currently Head of the School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at the University of Melbourne, Australia. She has a PhD from the Faculty of Humanities, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia.

Her research study was published as ‘Say little do much, nurses, nuns and hospitals in the nineteenth century’, University of Pennsylvania Press (2001). It is a history of the nineteenth-century religious nurses in Australia, Britain and North America that discusses their impact on the professionalization of nursing. Dr. Nelson was appointed Rosenstadt Visiting Professor at the Faculty in September 2001 and is well known in the academic community. She is currently working on a general history of nursing, and an examination of virtue ethics in the profession.

(Excerpted from Vital Connections, Summer 2005. Published bi-annually by the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto).

Obituary

Leslie, Ardith Beatrice (Ardith B. Leslie, RN, Lt. Nursing Sister). Passed away peacefully at Hastings Manor on the 22nd of June, 2005. Born May 22, 1919 near Iroquois, Ontario. Ardith was the oldest child of May and James Everett. After high school she trained as a registered nurse at Kingston General hospital (KGH) graduating in 1941. Following graduation From KGH, she nursed at the Ottawa Civic Hospital for 3 years. In January 1944, Ardith went overseas as a nursing sister with the Royal Canadian Auxiliary Medical Corps. She was stationed at a military hospital at Branshod, south of London, England. As head nurse she triaged wounded soldiers convoyed from continental Europe. She married Bryson Leslie in Surrey, England on November 23, 1944. Both returned from the war in 1945, to begin their married life in Belleville, where Bryson resumed his career in the family shoe business.

Ardith was active in both her church and community. She was a member of Y’s Menettes club, President of the U.C.W. at Bridge Street United Church, President of the Women’s Christian Association and a member of the Board of Governors of the Belleville General Hospital. For many years, she coordinated blood donor clinics for the Red Cross. Ardith was an active member of the “38” club and “the Stitchery Group”. She is loved and missed by her family and many friends, but especially by her 9 grandchildren.

Article

The Channel Islands’ Underground Hospitals

The islands of Jersey and Guernsey together with the other Channel Islands were occupied by the Germans during World War II. As the only part of Britain to be under enemy rule, they were both a potential stepping-stone and a forward defence for Germany.

Hitler wanted the islands fortified and the possibility of them ever being used as a staging

post for an attack on Europe nullified. Therefore, in October 1941, he ordered permanent fortification of the Channel Islands. supervised by Dr. Fritz Todt, head of the Organization Todt. The work would be carried out in part by the army and in part by Todt's organization. He recruited workers from Spanish Republicans, Russian prisoners, Jews already in concentration camps, political prisoners, unemployed conscripts from France, North Africans, Poles and whomever else he could find. This massive workforce was employed under the most appalling conditions—long hours; dangerous, physically exhausting work; inadequate clothing, accommodation and food.

A lot of work over a two and a half year period went into improving the German defences with reinforced concrete structures on Jersey and Guernsey and the other islands. These were both to prevent sea-borne attack and also to protect against bombing. Even before the work was completed, these islands were the most heavily defended sections of Hitler's "Atlantic Wall". In Jersey, 59 infantry and naval defence installations were built, together with 11 concrete towers for signaling and direction finding. To accomplish the work at various sites, a railway system also had to be built.

Part of the original plan included tunnels, which were originally intended for munitions, vehicles and men. Sixteen were planned for Jersey at Meadowbank, though only two were completed. These were to be artillery barracks, but later were redesignated as a military hospital. Work went on around the clock, 43,900 tons of rock was dug out and 6.020 square metres of concrete poured.

The Jersey hospital has about one kilometre of completed corridors and chambers, and there is a half-kilometer unfinished tunnel. The planned artillery barracks was linked to another excavation begun in the Cap Verd valley. However, the artillery depot was never to be. In 1944 the plan was changed and the tunnels were fitted out as a hospital, probably

in preparation for D-Day invasion casualties for the wounded expected when Jersey was eventually invaded.

Today, visitors can see a re-creation of the hospital as it was, although not all areas are accessible to the public. Begun with the same intentions for other tunnels, the largest structure found at St. Andrew, Guernsey was transformed into a hospital in 1944 when an Allied invasion seemed closer. The hospital was equipped with wards for 500 patients as well as other facilities for a hospital. Less common, was the cinema, which was provided for staff and patients. In an emergency, the hospital could have taken double the number of patients. The result was a structure which cannot fail to impress—centrally heated, air-conditioned, equipped with a drainage system, air seals and escape shafts—but it was never used. So many died building it, but not in hospital beds. For them there was no escape.

A plaque tells the story of how "*The slave laborers were regarded as animals, watered and fed like animals, but they weren't paid and they worked extremely long hours. Under these conditions men of many nations labored to construct this hospital. Those who survived will never forget, those who did not will never be forgotten*" In one tunnel a candle burns in memory of those who died and the plaque in the Jersey hospital goes on to tell us how "*This exhibition is a reminder of the five years of occupation and is dedicated to all who suffered the hardship of that time*". Postcards exist that depict scenes of the tunnel and hospital and are a graphic reminder of a gross misuse of human beings. The final irony must be that such cruelty was used to produce places destined, ultimately, for care.

(Excerpted from "Postcards at War: The Channel Islands' Underground Hospitals" by Peter Nelson, 2004).

Dates to Remember

**CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE HISTORY OF NURSING/
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE**

POUR L'HISTOIRE DU NURSING
CAHN/ACHN 19th annual meeting
Vancouver, BC June 8-10, 2006.

Editor Newsletter

History of Nursing Writing Prize

The Allemang Centre is offering a prize of \$500 for the best essay in the history of nursing written by a student in the year September 2004 through August 2005.

Dorothy Wylie. Please contact her regarding news items, short articles, announcements, etc. that you would like to have reported.
304 - 65 Scadding Avenue Toronto ON M5A 4L1. e-mail: wyliedm@aol.com

Criteria for submissions:

1. The paper may deal with any topic in the history of nursing in any period and in any country.
2. Papers should be a minimum of 8 pages, and a maximum of 25 pages in length including footnotes.
3. Both undergraduate and graduate students may submit.
4. The student must be enrolled in a university or community college in Ontario. Students **from any faculty, including nursing, social science, humanities and science**, are invited to apply.

The deadline for submission is 31 August 2005. The prize will be awarded in October 2005.

Papers may be submitted either by e-mail or in hard copy. Electronic copies should be in Microsoft Word include academic affiliation, address, telephone and fax numbers. Students submitting in hard copy should send three copies. The first copy should have the name, academic affiliation, address, telephone, fax and e-mail. The remaining two copies should have no identification.

Please send papers to the vice-president of Allemang Centre:
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