

# HISTORY OF NURSING NEWS

Volume 16 Issue 3

December 2005

## Woodward Lecture Tea Party

Members of the BC History of Nursing Group, military nurses and friends met on October 27, 2005 to pay tribute to Cynthia Toman, the UBC Marion Woodward Lecturer. Twenty six attended the tea hosted by Nina Rumen and Sheila Zerr. Birthday girls Nina Rumen and Ethel Warbinek were honored, adding to the pleasure of the event. Those attending had a chance to speak with Cynthia and hear about her historical research endeavors. World War II nursing sisters, June Newton and Joan Doree, spoke of their experiences with Cynthia Toman



**Dr Cynthia Toman greets Nina Rumen and Ethel Warbinek**

Historical Researchers Geertje Boschma and Sonya Grympa told of their projects. Stephanie Buckingham of Malaspina University College gave an overview of the on-line nursing history course that will soon be up and running and available to students throughout BC. The afternoon proved most enjoyable.

### President's Message – Ethel Warbinek

As 2005 comes to a close our History of Nursing Group can look back on a most successful and gratifying year. I began my 6-month term November 1, 2005 and wish on behalf of all of us, to thank Beth Fitzpatrick who completed her term as President at the end of October.

With RNABC's change to the College of Registered Nurses of BC, we have revised our logo. RNABC has been removed and replaced with *BC History of Nursing*. It will take a while before new letterhead, receipts and other documents are printed.

A gentle reminder and request for members willing to serve on the executive and/or join a committee. Some of our members, who joined in 1989 when the HoN group formed, are no longer active and we need to find replacements if we are to sustain our group and plan for the future. Glennis Zilm, who started the first HoN Newsletter and was its sole editor for many years and later co-editor, has resigned from the Editorial Board after 17 years. We offer our sincere appreciation for all her hard work, editorial expertise and dedication. We hope she continues to pursue her interests in Nursing History and writing and look forward to contributions to the newsletter, but we will miss her.

As 2006 approaches, we are looking forward to the upcoming CAHN conference and excited about the Florence Nightingale Opera which we hope you will attend. It would be a shame to miss such a memorable event.



Two WW II Nursing Sisters at the Tea. June Newton, left and Joan Doree

## Portable Oxygen Tent Installed at Hospital

Hospital Ladies Aid Supply Latest  
Type of Machine For Use

The Hospital Ladies' Aid, who are sponsoring the annual Easter Monday ball in aid of the St. Eugene hospital, have recently purchased a Heidbrink Aero-Tent, an innovation in hospital work used for supplying oxygen to patients. While the machine weighs but 75 pounds, the cost to the Ladies' Aid was \$280.00, being one of the most modern and scientific which can be set up and placed in operation in a few minutes. Whatever is the patient's oxygen requirement, it is delivered evenly under automatic regulation at any desired rate between one and fifteen liters per minute. The patient's oxygen supply, the circulation, cooling and humidity are all controlled without motors or other mechanical equipment, making operation practically silent.

The Ladies' Aid are to be congratulated on their enterprise and it is hoped the public will show their appreciation of their efforts by generously patronizing the annual hospital ball Monday next in the Cranbrook Auditorium.

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A news clipping from Cranbrook Courier  
April 13, 1935

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Merry Christmas and Every Good Wish for 2006 to Readers/ Members of the BC History of Nursing Group.

Some of you may have experienced winter's short days and cold weather that is referred to in the 1949 epic in the Peace River district. Others among you may only imagine the circumstance. And some of you lower mainland city folk missed the trepidation experienced by small town girls being immersed in a city and a crowd in dormitories. At this time I say thank you to the classmates who kindly invited me to their parents homes while I was a student. Those classmates are still remembered and we still exchange Christmas cards.

## SISTERS OF St. ANN; St. Martin's Hospital

By Diana Bright of Naramata

The Sisters of St. Ann, a Roman Catholic Order begun in 1850 in Quebec, were hospital pioneers. In 1858 four sisters arrived at the new colony of Vancouver Island to begin nursing the sick and teaching in the convent school located in Victoria. It was the time of the Barkerville Gold Rush and adventurers were flocking to the area. From the late 1870s to the early 1940s the sisters founded schools and hospitals in communities throughout British Columbia and Alaska. One community that benefited was Oliver in the southern interior of BC.

In 1939 the town of Oliver approached the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Grey Sisters and the sisters of St. Ann to see if they would be interested in financing and operating a hospital in the community. Only the Sisters of St. Ann responded positively.

Mother General Leopoldine of the St. Ann Mother House at Lachine, Quebec, wrote to the Hospital Board on April 18, 1941 informing them that the Sisters agreed to participate in the project. In July Mr. Tupper, MLA, informed the Board that a parcel of land was granted for the building site. This thereby made it a public hospital.

Mother Mary Mark, then Mother Provincial, met to discuss the design and running of the proposed 42 bed hospital. Government architects designed the building and estimated the cost for buildings and equipment to be \$120,000. A grant of \$10,000 was given by the Government, and \$36,000 was collected in donations including personal contributions from the Mother General, Mother Provincial and the Sisters at Juneau. The Sisters of St. Ann provided 90% of the needed funds for the building by guaranteeing all their assets as collateral to get a loan from Credit Foncier. The Sisters were "in the anomalous position of owning a hospital building, which is a public hospital, of having to pay for board and lodging in their own building, the mortgage on which they are

paying off out of salaries earned in the course of their duties; not being able to amortize the building by way of depreciation; Keeping it in good state of repair out of their own private funds, and owning and operating a hospital over which they have not a majority control." (*Oliver Archival Records*)

St. Martin's Hospital opened November 29, 1942. In 1943 there were 407 admissions; five years later there were 1,151. Forty-eight babies were born in St. Martins during its first year and six years later there were 178 births.

Prior to the BC Government's Medical Insurance program, St. Martin's instituted its own hospital insurance at \$16 per contract per year. Five days in the Maternity ward cost \$32 without a contract and \$23 with a contract. The cost for a general ward stay was \$5.50 per day.

St. Martin's operated until 1973 when the South Okanagan General Hospital opened. Despite many discussions on the fate of St. Martin's, it was demolished in 1981.

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IN MEMORIAM  
HONORING THE PIONEER DOCTORS  
DR. J. KING, DR. F. W. GREEN, DR. G. E. L. MACKINNON

THE SPIRIT OF ST. EUGENE HOSPITAL  
AND THE  
REVEREND SISTERS OF CHARITY AND PROVIDENCE  
WHO, WITH DEDICATION AND COMPASSION,  
ADMINISTERED THIS VITAL PIECE OF HISTORY  
FOR NEARLY 70 YEARS (1901 -1968)

MAY YOU LONG BE REMEMBERED WITH HONOR,  
LOVE AND PRIDE BY THE CITIZENS OF CRANBROOK

THIS MEMORIAL HAS BEEN PLACED HERE BY THE  
ST. EUGENE HOSPITAL NURSES ALUMNAE - 2005

A lovely picture of the old St. Eugene Hospital now hangs in Cranbrook City Hall. St. Eugene Nursing Alumnae members Helen Faulkner and Nellie Hrisook are shown here at the dedication of picture and plaque as one event celebrating Cranbrook's Centennial Year.

### Armstrong's First School Nurse

The Women's Institute of British Columbia will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2009. The Armstrong chapter of W.I. was formed in 1919. Their first concern was proper nutrition for children who had to carry lunches to their Consolidated School. Soup or hot chocolate was served to over 170 children daily. Members of the W.I. worried about hygiene and sanitation so campaigned to obtain a School Nurse. Appeals were made to City Hall, School Board and Dr. Young, director of Public Health for B.C. All groups faced a shortage of funds. The W.I. committed themselves to providing a school a place to live, supplies and travel expenses. Dr. Young agreed to hire a nurse on a trial basis after which a plebiscite would determine whether the program would continue.

Miss Amy Louise Mercer was recruited, welcomed by a reception and installed in two rooms upstairs in the W.I. in November 1924. On December 1<sup>st</sup> she commenced duties, creating new routines at school, conducting baby clinics,, giving nutritional advice and giving help wherever it was needed. If a child missed school she walked to that home (before telephones) to help in whatever way she could. When the plebiscite was held on February 25, 1925 the result was a nearly unanimous "Yes" to retain the School Nurse.

Miss Mercer made friends wherever she went. She was the darling of the Armstrong Women's Institute, and very active in the congregation of St. James Anglican Church. She volunteered to give up several weeks of her vacation to go on staff at Community Camp in July. She felt ill but made light of the pain. She had promised to hand out diplomas on the last day of school. After the ceremonies were over she was taken to hospital and operated on for appendicitis.. It was too late, however, as the appendix had ruptured, peritonitis was rampant. The first School nurse in Armstrong passed away 24 hours later- on June 28, 1925 at age 45.

The researcher from the Armstrong Women's Institute did not manage to access training and professional development records but shares what the local newspaper of the time reported. (*Are any of our readers in a position to check information in Ontario ?*) Amy Louise Mercer was born October 30, 1879 in Ontario. She probably trained at Toronto Western Hospital. She went to Ohio where she worked for the Department of Health until WW I broke out. She came back to serve with Canadian Forces and following her time in service she returned to nursing in Toronto (possibly Public Health ). Later she came west to work with tubercular patients in Tranquille Sanatorium. She was taking time off from Tranquille , visiting a brother in Invermere and sister in Brisco, when Dr. Young convinced her to become the first School Nurse in Armstrong.

Following her death and burial the Armstrong Women's Institute promised to put a suitable marker on her grave. The topic of a tombstone for Miss Mercer was mentioned on each anniversary of her death for eleven years in minutes. Then it was forgotten until Mrs. Faith Hall undertook research for the book to be prepared for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary . So- the Women's Institute arranged for a memorial headstone to be set in place on June 26, 2004. The graveside service was attended by great niece Margaret Christensen of Invermere and five other members of the Mercer family.

*Thanks to Mrs. Faith Hall of Armstrong , and Margaret Christensen*  
*This article appeared in full in the 69<sup>th</sup> Report of the OKANAGAN*  
*Historical Society.* Any further information on Amy Louise Mercer should be sent to Editor Naomi Miller, Box 105, Wasa, BC V0B 2K0, [naomi-j@telus.net](mailto:naomi-j@telus.net). or phone 250-422-3594. I promise to share information with Mrs. Hall and grand niece Margaret Christensen.

### Diphtheria - 1949

There's drama on every page of nurse Aileen Bond's 6 page report. Monica Green condensed the report to 4 paragraphs accompanied by 7 pictures in her book *Through the years with Public Health Nursing*. Miss Bond summarized her report: 53 known cases; 5 deaths; first report received December 15, 1949; First anti-toxin given December 18 and 19.; penicillin and aureomycin had no effect on membranous throats: Penicillin following anti-toxin appeared to reduce length of illness and other complications.

Where were the patients? They were at the Beaver Indian Camp on Stoney River , Halfway Valley, 180 road miles from Fort St. John in the Peace River. Indian Affairs Miss Wilson flew down from Whitehorse to take charge. Miss Bond, Senior Public Health Nurse could only serve as an assistant. Miss Wilson and the Indian Agent set off towards Stoney River in a power wagon loaded with food and supplies. Two feet of snow forced them to hire a teamster and sleigh. Miss Wilson made her first inspection in twilight after arriving on horseback. She gave an acutely ill 26 year old 20,000 units of anti-toxin and 60,000 units of penicillin. Two days later the man was out riding his horse.

Base camp was set in a one roomed drafty cabin which boasted two rickety stoves, a sleeping bench in one corner, rough planking haphazardly laid as flooring, with no outdoor sanitary facilities. The two nurses shared this headquarters with 3 to 5 men. In the short hours of daylight in temperatures from 20 to 60 below F, the two nurses rode horseback to visit the sick and their families. First they removed their outer travel gear at the chief's house, then entered each tent with bag and flashlight. Penicillin and anti-toxin were strapped to their bodies to prevent freezing. Needles, boiled at base camp had also been dried in the oven, Those showing grey patches in the throat were given anti-toxin and 30,000 units of penicillin. Each was offered a hot drink of either brandy and sugar or Bovril. Often this was the patient's only nourishment until food was shipped in 10 days later. It was not easy to look professional crawling on hands and knees, frequently blinded by smoke from the central campfire.



Laura (Glanville) McPherson, described in the January 2004 Newsletter, is shown here with her daughter Sherron Ockenden shortly before her 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Laura worked in several TB hospitals in her career. Daughter Sherron graduated from the Royal Jubilee Hospital and sent the souvenir card shown below.



## DATES TO REMEMBER



Saturday, February 4, 2006  
Ethel John's Research Day - Xi Eta  
"Providing Safe and Effective Care:  
ACTION through Expert Practice,  
Leadership and Research"  
St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, BC  
0800 - 1630 (lunch included)

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Florence Nightingale Opera May 12 &  
13, 2006

The BC History of Nursing Group and  
the University of British Columbia's  
School of Nursing and the Department  
of Music will present the opera

"Florence: The Lady with the Lamp"  
on May 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm and May 13<sup>th</sup>  
at 2:00 pm in UBC's renovated "Old  
Auditorium"(across from the School of  
Music. This is a modern opera by a  
Canadian composer and has only been  
performed once before. It will be pre-  
sented by students from the UBC School  
Of Music. Limited tickets are available  
C/O Cheryl Entwistle at 604-822-7449.  
and are \$15 each.

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18<sup>th</sup> Annual CAHN/ACHN History of Nursing Conference- June 8-10, 2006  
The Canadian Association for the History of Nursing and our own BC  
History of Nursing Group will host the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference at historical

St. Paul's Hospital, 1081 Burrard Street , Vancouver, BC . The theme is "Frontline Nurse: Historical Milestones"

Deadline for abstracts is January 15, 2006. Abstracts should be 250 words in length, font size 12 point, and may be in either English or French. Abstract should include complete title, authors name, address, phone number and email address. The paper should be 20 minutes in length. Sessions will include three 20 minute papers, followed by comment from moderator , and up to 20 minutes for questions from audience. Submit abstracts to Lynne Esson , CAHN 2006 Conference, Unit 5- 8060 St Albans Road, Richmond, B.C. V6K 2K9 or email to [esson@nursing.ubc.ca](mailto:esson@nursing.ubc.ca) or fax 604-822-7466.

For full information about the Conference please contact Lenore Radom (email [lenormail@lightspeed.ca](mailto:lenormail@lightspeed.ca)) or visit our website where registration forms can be downloaded ( [www.bcnursinghistory.ca](http://www.bcnursinghistory.ca))

The Conference Hotel is the Vancouver Wall Centre. Information on hotels and parking is available through Lois Blais ([lblais@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:lblais@interchange.ubc.ca)) or Lynne Esson. (See above) Special student rates are available. And financial assistance for students presenting papers can be arranged with Sheil Zerr ([szerr@telus.net](mailto:szerr@telus.net))

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#### HELP NEEDED !

We urgently need someone to step forward to co-ordinate History of Nursing Displays. This fascinating job has been done by Sheila Zerr for the past two years and she wishes to step down because she chairs a committee that is planning for the CAHN 2006 Conference in June. Please contact Sheila to learn more about these responsibilities. Phone 604-943--3012 or email [szerr@telus.net](mailto:szerr@telus.net)

### Erickson

Margaret Erickson was born February 1, 1921 in the rural family home near Cranbrook. She was the seventh child and second daughter (much to the delight of her older sister Elsie.) Shortly after Margaret was born the family moved to downtown Cranbrook. She attended Central School to Grade Eight then the old Tenth Avenue High School. She graduated at 17 and learned that she could not go into training until she was 19. Sometimes she assisted her mother chamber maiding at the Byng Hotel, and several families employed her to do housework. During her early teen years the Baptist Church Young People's Group/Sunday School attracted Margaret and many students. At the end of each year the student with best attendance, most correct answers on Bible study tests and enthusiastic participation was rewarded with a week at a provincial camp on Keats Island. Marg was the top Cranbrook teen but she tried to wiggle out of going because she was afraid to travel alone. A classmate, Dorothy Brown, daughter of the High School principal, eased her discomfort by promising to meet her at the bus stop in Vancouver, then travel the rest of the way with her to camp. Comforted by the knowledge that Dorothy would be attending this camp, Marg boarded the bus, which in those days travelled through Washington state and then up the Pacific coast, to Vancouver. Marg had a wonderful week at camp. Mr. Brown put her aboard the Greyhound for the return trip. At Blaine customs officers noted that she had a tiny suitcase, a bedroll and a mere \$1.25 in her pocket. They felt sure she must be a runaway. The bus was delayed until customs had contacted the Browns in Vancouver and the Ericksons in Cranbrook ascertaining the she was not a runaway.

St. Eugene's administration had a dilemma. Miss Erickson and her best friend Lorna Caughey were eager to commence training. The rules said a candidate must be 19 years of age. These two were enrolled in the class that commenced in January 1940 BUT they took classes each day and were despatched to sleep at their parent's homes until that birthday arrived, Marg on February 1st, Lorna the

week later. Once they joined the other two probies in residence they formed a fearsome foursome, a group which has stayed in touch for sixty years now. Miss Olga Belecky, instructor, taught all the preferred routines but noted that wartime shortages were common. Improvization was necessary. Margaret shone as a bedmaker having done mitred corners often for her mother while working in the hotel. All four seriously did practice procedures on a big cloth dummy, "Mrs. Malaprop" There were lectures and exams and the happy Capping ceremony (when Miss Bolecky set Margaret's cap on crooked.) That fall the four lively misses were included in initiation for the September class- Seniors insisted that the newcomers braid their hair. This was particularly effective on Rosemary, a girl with a head of copper coloured fly away hair. There were many cheerful interchanges in the residence but most waking hours were dedicated to working in the hospital. One unexpected assignment came when Sister sent Marg and Lorna to make tomato aspic for all patients and staff. Neither girl had experienced the jellied treat. They giggled as they read the recipe, stirred, poured and set in the cooler. Everyone was delighted with the relief from monotonous menu.

St. Eugene's students were sent for training at either Essondale (psychiatric) or Tranquille (tuberculosis). A handful of girls managed to arrange for both options. Miss Erickson, an Intermediate student, was sent off to Tranquille with a Senior, Dorothy Leonard. The nursing duties there were relatively stress free, and these trainees enjoyed the surrounding gardens and Saturday night square dance parties at the Tranquille Hall. One day Marg was startled when a messenger instructed her to report immediately to the Supervisor's office. Her conscience was clear. She couldn't think of anything she might have done wrong. There-sitting in the office, was her boyfriend, Bob Hutchison. Bob had a few days leave from his army base in Vernon and had hitchhiked to Tranquille. The supervisor was very kind. She gave Margaret permission to go into Kamloops for a few hours and she assigned a bed in male staff quarters where Bob could sleep for a couple of nights. What to do ? They had missed the noon bus. Word

spread to surrounding staff and a Hindu farm worker insisted that Bob could use his old pickup truck. The couple were very grateful - but immediately realized that the vehicle had minimum braking and no wheel alignment. Bob drove very cautiously and stopped on the outskirts of town, carefully facing back towards Tranquille and parked atop a small hill just in case it needed to roll before it would start. The sweethearts walked into town, checked out the jewelry shops and chose an engagement ring for Margie.

During their senior year students were taught operating room techniques. They began with scrubbing for minor procedures and were obligated to have at least ten major scrubs. Because this was a small hospital these major scrubs were infrequent. Margaret began to worry that she might be denied the full quota of ten. She enjoyed the OR. Dr. Sullivan observed her efficiency and commented, "Forget your boyfriend. You could make a good career as a scrub nurse." So, when her classroom days were completed in January 1943, Miss Erickson went to be the Operating Room nurse in the Mater Misericordia Hospital in Rossland. There she learned sterilizing techniques in equipment new at that time. When no surgery was scheduled she assisted in maternity. On days off she walked down the long hill into Trail but had to stay in touch with the hospital as she was on call for emergencies. The two surgeons in Rossland were reluctant to see her go when she headed back to Cranbrook to write her Registered Nurse exams and participate in their Class of '43 graduation ceremony. The staff at St. Eugene's Hospital included the very community minded Doctors W.O. Green and J. Sullivan, the popular chaplain Father Thomas Patrick Freney, several Sisters (some of whom were loved, some feared), a handful of RNs, an orderly, a handyman and kitchen staff. In those days nurses did most of the cleaning, sterilizing, and clerical work. Laundry was sent out. Sister Paul Bernard was in charge of arrangements for the graduation ceremony. Miss Erickson was chosen as valedictorian "because her voice could be heard in that old Cranbrook Auditorium." Traditionally the valedictory was read from an elaborate scroll.

Marg sensed that no action had been taken to prepare the scroll so she memorized her speech. She stood with her hands demurely folded and gave her talk successfully, but remembers feeling critical of good old Dr. Sullivan standing very casually with hands in pockets, giving a few perfunctory remarks.

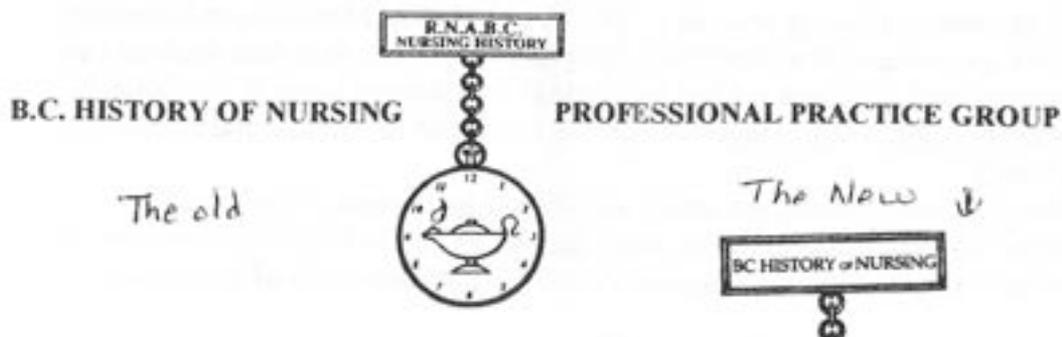
.Bernice Quick obtained a position in Trail Hospital right after graduation. She convinced her classmate Miss Erickson that Trail was a town with more amenities than Rossland so the two went to work there. Marg was not assigned any surgical duties in Trail. Instead, she and Bernice worked some extremely hectic shifts in the isolation unit. Forty children came in with scarlet fever. Hardly had that epidemic subsided when dozens of cases of whooping cough had to be treated. Also isolated were two adults with major problems., one the wife of a Cominco boss who had contracted something while travelling on holiday abroad.

Once these harrowing experiences with very ill children were over, Marg and Bernice enjoyed every minute of their time in Trail. The hospital food was excellent. Staff and neighbours were friendly. Nurses in residence received invitations to dances, parties and dinners. Gus Erickson (no relation) bachelor owner of a local bus line, held catered smorgasbord dinners for hospital staff at his home up "the Gulch". Travelling salesman touched base at the residence for friendship, and often to obtain unused liquor ration cards. There was swimming in summer and skating in winter. But Margaret decided to leave in December 1943 and come over to Kimberley Hospital. Her fiance, Bob, had done his basic training with the Army but had been released to work at home in Kimberley when his mother was widowed. Bob had to support his mother and two younger siblings.

Marg had some good experiences and not so good events in that hospital. A depressed patient leaped to his death through a window while Miss Erickson was giving report to the oncoming midnight shift. Later the ghost of the deceased

appeared in the nurses residence to try to apologize and comfort her. Marg and Bob arranged to be married on April 8, 1944. They moved into a small home on Caldwell Street in Lower Blarhmont. Marg walked 2 1/2 miles to work at the hospital. The Army, noting a change in who was now his dependant, recalled Bob and sent him overseas as quickly as possible. Her duties were varied as patient loads varied. In August 1944 she was on duty in Maternity when Rod Montieth was born. Twenty-one years later this baby became her son-in-law. Mrs. Hutchison worked at the Kimberley Hospital for almost a year after Bob's departure. She saw an advertisement for "DATA GIRL" at the concentrator. She applied, was accepted, donned overalls and went to work recording data and checking samples. She was teased but enjoyed the dirty job which paid more than nursing and was a mere ten minutes walk from her home. No more 2 1/2 mile walk to work. When the war was over, and the cleanup in Europe done by Bob's army unit, and others., men returned to fill all positions in Kimberley. Bob got his job back and Marg lost hers. Margaret Erickson Hutchison then started "the best possible career" . That career was being a Mother.

*Mrs. Hutchison gave this story to Naomi Miller in 2003. In April 2004 she and Bob celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since then she became a widow with a brand new great grandchild. Margaret is a staunch supporter of the St. Eugene's Nurses Alumnae Association.*



#### BOOK REVIEW

Mann, Susan. (2005). *Margaret Macdonald: Imperial Daughter*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. 40 b& w photos, 328 pages.

Susan Mann has written a biography of this remarkable woman who steadfastly pursued a military nursing career by using her social, professional and family contacts to obtain sought after positions. Born in 1873 in Bailey's Brook rural Nova Scotia, Margaret Macdonald managed to secure her first job as a nurse in the Spanish American War, followed by time in the South African War and then in Panama. Based on these three military experiences, she was one of the first two nurses to receive a permanent position in the Canadian Army Medical Corps in 1906.

The high point in her career was the First World War when she was appointed matron-in-chief of Canada's military nurses, a first for Canada. Along with this title came the rank of major, the first such designation for a woman in the British Empire. In 1914, there were only five nursing sisters in Canada's Permanent Army Corps and by 1918, there were close to 3000. Margaret thrived in the military environment. Working out of her London office, she was responsible for recruitment, training and posting of Canada's nursing sisters. It was challenge to staff the Canadian military hospitals in England and France. She knew where all her nurses were located and supervised their health and safety. On several occasions she intervened when living conditions were unsanitary or nourishing food was lacking. In these situations she persisted until the problems were solved to her satisfaction. During the five years in England, she toured 11 Canadian hospitals in France and made 70 visits to those in England. Her job was demanding and involved mountains of paper work so the numerous social events to which she was invited provided a respite for her. She loved her time in London and was blessed with a fine sense of humour. Aside from her military career, she firmly believed in equal rights for women.

When she returned to Ottawa in 1919, the war had been over for a year. She loved military nursing and wished to continue, but the nursing sisters were disbursed as the Army felt there was no longer a need for them. Her age was also a deterrent as she was considered too old. She was 46. She dearly hoped a place would be found for her as she had a “yen for wars” and loved being in the thick of things. However that was not to be.

As she was still attached to the Royal Canadian Medical Corps, a job had to be found for her, so she was commissioned to write the official history of the nursing service. Margaret was ill suited for this undertaking as her heart was not in it. She struggled but to no avail and never did complete the task. She retired in 1922 and moved back to the family home in Nova Scotia where she spent a peaceful time with family, friends and colleagues. Margaret died in 1948.

Susan Mann is to be commended for her extensive research into the life of Margaret Macdonald as many personal records were lost over the years. Unfortunately Margaret's sister burned her letters in 1974, so Mann can be forgiven for her assumptions about what Margaret may have thought or the actions she might have taken. This said, the book presents the story of a nurse who moved up through the military and nursing ranks to proudly represent Canada as its first Matron-in-Chief and first female major. Margaret Macdonald was truly an “imperial daughter.” The book is available on loan from the Surrey Public Library and possibly at others.

Reviewed by Ethel Warbinek

### Corrections

In the October issue of B.C. History of Nursing News gremlins crept in. The article "Keeping the Fires Stoked: A Tribute to OUTPOST Nurses," was written by Barbara Bavington, RN,BSN, MSN who has lived and worked in BC since moving from Australia many years ago. She has a consulting practice, teaches occasionally, does community health work in northern Canada and for nine years provided casual relief to Red Cross Outposts around BC. If you would like to view the original article with color photographs see our Website [www.bcnursinghistory.ca](http://www.bcnursinghistory.ca)

And thanks to Lenore Radom whose name was omitted, for writing SUMMER EVENT.

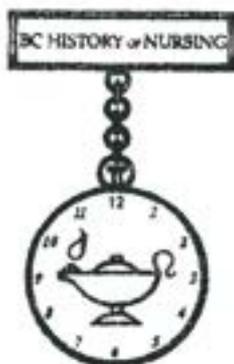
Apologies from October 2005 editor, Glennis Zilm

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### American Association for History of Nursing 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference

The AAHN conference will be held at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota from September 29 to October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. The Call for Abstracts is available on the AAHN website . Deadline for abstracts is January 15, 2006.

Published quarterly by the B.C. History of Nursing Group, PO Box 72082,  
RPO Sasamat, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6R 4P2



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The HoN Newsletter is published  
4 times a year. Submissions are welcome.  
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Brackendale, B.C. V0N 1H0  
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Issue by February 15, 2006