

SIR CHARLES TUPPER BUILDING WINDOW DISPLAY

By Gloria Stephens, March 2023

The Association Health Sciences Archives & Museums NS (AHSAMNS), through discussion with



Dean Anderson, Dalhousie University, to have two windows available for this organization to display their artifacts and historical events. One window featured the medical society and one the nursing profession. This article will provide the contents for the nurse's window.

The theme for the window: "NURSES FIRST". The information and pictures gathered are from the VGH School of Nursing Archives, the 'Nursing History NS Society and sponsored by AHSAMNS.

As NS is one of Canada's oldest provinces, a great many nursing 'firsts' commenced in NS, of which we are very proud to relate. A few examples will be outlined here. The first being the third oldest school of nursing in

Canada, the Victoria General Hospital School of Nursing – 1890 graduating eight in the first class, of which three were male students. The first 'Lady Superintendent (as titled at that time) in the Maritimes, was Julia Purdy, a graduate from Boston. The first nursing pin was in 1891 and used until 1931 and this pin until 1995. Considered to be the first graduate nurse in the Maritimes is Margaret Sheridan, class 1891. In 1909 the first Canadian nursing association was organized in Halifax by VGH nurses and titled 'Graduate Nurses Association NS' (GNANS) with the first president being Jobena (Thomas) Forrest, VGH class 1898. The first RN exam of Canada was in 1925, written in Halifax, when the Graduate Association changed to become the RNANS and the first Registrar was Florence Fraser, VGH Class 1908. She presented the first RN Diploma to Evaline Pemberton who is recognized to be the first RN in Canada by CNA.

The next section of the display honours nurses who served in WW1 along with short descriptions of the Black Cross Nurses, the first Public Health Director in NS, the beginning of the Alumni, first Port Nursery in the world and first black nurses in NS. The artifacts displayed are: nurse's caps: first VG cap, public health cap, pier 21 nurses cap, first Children's Hospital pin and a 1889 bedpan along with the story of 'nurses first fight for rights' : The bedpan issue, not wanting to serve the male patient.

This display will be available every day for about six months, which is in the foyer of the Tupper building, Halifax.

The display was put together by Gloria Stephens and Debbie Beveridge, both VGH graduates and members of the VGH Archives. Gloria is Past President of AHSAMNS.



DEBIE BEVERIDGE

GLORIA STEPHENS