

THE VGH SCHOOL OF NURSING ARCHIVES- BETHUNE BUILDING, HALIFAX, NS

The VGH School of Nursing Archives is remarkable, as it houses a comprehensive history of the VG Hospital, the VGH School of Nursing, as well as the Medical history of the city of Halifax. The museum items and original Archives has provided past evidence of notable contributions to the hospital, staff, patients and the public at large. This history must be preserved. Our collection of records and artifacts indicate the history of ailments, treatments, the nature of society and the advancement of medicine and nursing in Nova Scotia.



The VGH School of Nursing Archives is dedicated to the preservation of the history of nursing. Our mandate is to acquire and preserve memorabilia pertaining to the Victoria General Hospital, the School of Nursing and its graduates. The motto being: "Respect the Past to Build the Future".

Alfreda McQuade (class 1919) and hospital supervisor, suggested in the late 1930's that an archives would be in order. Several nurses started collecting items and self-storing them at home. By the 1950's, on the request of the Alumni, two rooms were granted in the 'new' nurses' residence (1952) by the Executive Director, Dr. C. Bethune, with a storage space on the 6th floor. Elizabeth Brown, class 1950, became the main volunteer but soon joined by Helen Abbass (1950) and Don Carruthers class 1941. Through the years the volunteers changed and in the 1990's the staff consisted of Madeleine McNeil, Shirley Dicks, and Marjorie Barteaux. More recently the staff consists of: Gloria Stephens, Hope Billard, Nina Wickens, Margot Williams, and Marilyn Webb. During the next couple of years (2019 -2020) a digitalization program will be in progress, so added to the staff for this project is Edith Ward and Beverly Smith. In the late 1990's the above mentioned space was taken away so now (2018) the archives is crowded into two small anti-rooms off the ballroom of the Bethune building with the threat of losing this. Large equipment is stored in the sub-basement of the MacKenzie building in a locked cage.

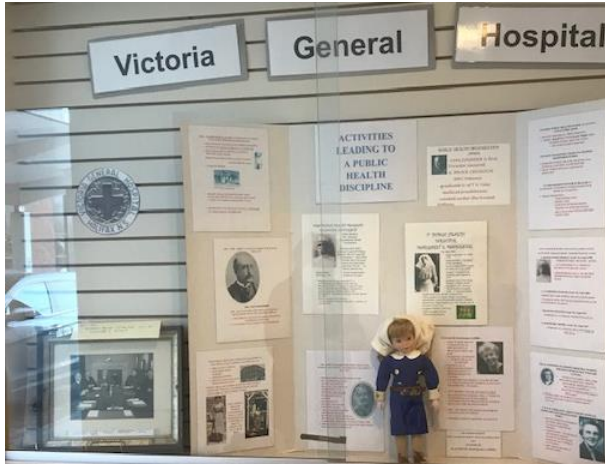
The archives is opened Monday from 8:30 to 2:30 PM, but will respond to any touring request. Closed for the months of July, August and December. Present manager is Gloria Stephens.

In 1990 Jean Nelson (class 1932) dressed two mannequins; WW1 belonged to Margaret MacKenzie (1908 class) who served in Gallipoli and the other, WW2, Jean's own uniform. As shown in the WW1 & WW2 display. A



valuable collection of war medals is also displayed as well as documented pictures, stories, war photo albums and war memorabilia.

The Archives has received awards: 1992 – a letter and medal from the 12th International Congress of Archives, Montreal, was presented to the Archives in recognition of the work being done; 1996 received the Phyllis Blakeley Award for Archival Excellence.



Quarterly, a window display is changed in the entrance to the cafeteria of the Centennial building.

Early ledgers, records, reports and documents of the hospital's beginning are available, as an example the Minute Book of 1867 when the hospital was called the 'Provincial & City Hospital'. This is in beautiful hand-writing as are the ledgers of patient care.

Extensive collection of school rings, pins, caps, capes and uniforms representing changes in the

uniforms and dress code.



1892 – 1931



1931 - 1995



1800's, 1906, 1931 to 1980's



SAMPLE OF MEDALS

There is a section of Fonds containing stories, artifacts and pictures of graduates. Along with this is a book titled Bio-Book and this will be a complete history of the School of Nursing graduates, hospital 'firsts' and any outstanding event which occurred in a particular year, with pictures and quotes from the nurses. There is also an extensive collection of original paintings which were donated to the hospital and school, photo albums, scrap books, certificates, diplomas and class books. The artifacts range from the early microscope, instruments, equipment and machines to 1995.

Researchers, authors, history students, film makers, historians and museums, far and wide as well as local, have all received benefits from this archives, of which we are very proud to share.