

Bulkley Valley District Hospital fonds

Fonds No. GF5

Accession No. 1986.7, 1992.9, 1997.51, 2004.20, 2007.3, 2017.25, 2017.36, 2017.53, 2020.36

Physical Description: 21 cm of textual records; 6 architectural drawings; 1 technical drawing; 3 photographs

Date Range: 1920-2001

Administrative History/Biographical Sketch

The Bulkley Valley District Hospital was established in 1920 by the Smithers' Citizens Association, with the guidance of Dr. Cecil H. Hankinson, a medical graduate from McGill University, Montreal, Quebec. The first Hospital occupied a pre-existing building (originally an electrical shop) on the corner of Second Avenue and King Street that was renovated to meet current medical demands, housing 13 beds, an operating room, an office, a kitchen and a dining area.

A board of directors was elected and included: E. E. Orchard, Charles Reid, L. S. McGill, James E. Kirby, and David Jennings. Dr. Hankinson was appointed medical superintendent. Dr. Hankinson and the Board of Directions went on to hire additional medical staff. Miss G. E. Eveleigh, R.N., was hired as matron and anesthetist, and Miss M. E. Williams, R.N., and Miss S.C. Smith, R.N., were hired to tend to patients and assist Dr. Hankinson. All three women were veterans of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, having served during the First World War. Other staff included a cook and an orderly. Both Dr. Hankinson and Mr. A.F. Dunn (Hospital Secretary) worked without compensation. The Hospital officially opened on September 1, 1920.

The Bulkley Valley District Hospital continued to expand, gaining a surgical department in 1921, an ambulance in March 1922, and the first x-ray machine in 1923. A log building was erected at the corner of First Ave and King Street to house the Hospital's nurses. In September of 1925, the Board of Directors endorsed a proposal for a new, more modern hospital introduced by Dr. Hankinson. However, fundraising did not begin in earnest until four year later, in 1929, and by this time Dr. Hankinson had left Smithers, B.C. for Prince Rupert, B.C. During this time, fundraising for the new Hospital proceeded slowly as a result of the Great Depression and outside sources of funding were considered.

In 1933, the Hospital Board through Bishop Buno, bishop of the Yukon and Prince Rupert Vicariate, invited the Sisters of St. Ann to build a new hospital and take over the management and operation of the Bulkley Valley District Hospital. On May 31, 1933, an official agreement was signed by the Hospital Board and the Sisters of St. Ann, transferring all current holdings to the Sisters. The Sisters agreed to build a new hospital for \$25,000. The planning for a new hospital began immediately.

Despite the economic limitations put forth by the Great Depression, the citizens, local clubs and businesses of Smithers donated money, building materials and their time in support of this project. J. H. Kirby donated three lots located on the hill overlooking the town. Sister Mary Osithe sketched out the first plans for the new Hospital, which were translated, free of charge, by BC Government Architect Henry Whittaker and his assistant, Mr. Hargreaves, into a final design. The foundation for the new Hospital was in place by the end of August, 1933, and on October 29, 1933, a corner stone was laid. In 1934, the first patients were moved into the new building from the original location on Second Avenue

and King Street. The Hospital's new board consisted of representatives from the Catholic, Anglican and United Churches, the provincial government, the Ladies' Auxiliary, the town commission and the Sisters of St. Ann. The new Bulkley Valley District Hospital (Sacred Heart Hospital to the Sisters) was officially opened on June 2, 1934.

Despite construction costs being quoted from \$24,000 to \$30,000, the actual cost came to well over \$60,000 due to terrible weather conditions that delayed shipments and prolonged construction. While the Provincial Government agreed to pay one-third of the cost, and the Oblate Order loaned the Sisters \$17,000, the amount owing still placed the Sisters in financial uncertainty. The Sisters provided care for Indigenous patients, which the Department of Indian Affairs paid for thus subsidizing the operating costs of the Hospital. However, since most Indigenous patients attended the nearer Wrinch Memorial Hospital in Hazelton, B.C., the income received from Indian Affairs did not alleviate the financial burden.

In 1948, both the Federal Government and B.C.'s Provincial Secretary, George Pearson, promised separate funding opportunities to aid in building additions to existing hospital facilities. The Sisters took advantage of this opportunity and planned a new nurses' residence. Plans were drawn by BC Government Architect, Henry Whittaker, and George Adomeit was contracted to build it. The new Nurses' Residence was opened on May, 1949.

Sister Mary Kathleen was appointed as Administrator in 1953. She determined that a new wing should be added onto the Hospital and Henry Whittaker drew up a plan for the new addition. In June 1954, a BC Health Minister approved a 30-bed reinforced concrete addition. The building was to include an emergency operating room, not exceed \$215,000, and would feature the first elevator in Smithers. The New Steel Concrete Memorial Wing opened on March 30, 1955.

In 1957, the new Administrator, Sister Mary Lucita, began plans for an addition to the Nurses' Residence. The Sisters requested that Night Avenue between Queen Street and Columbia Drive, as well as the T-shaped lane behind the hospital be closed so the Hospital could be further expanded. In addition to this, the original 1934 section of the Hospital was in desperate need of repair and the Hospital was no longer meeting ever increasing patient needs. While extra funding was pursued for such expansions, the Sisters of St. Ann were no longer able to raise their portion of the required funds and had to cease such fundraising endeavors.

By 1964, there was a shortage of doctors and the BC College of Physicians and Surgeons suggested an internship program that would send 3rd year medical students to remote locations. This would alleviate the work load taken on by the Sisters (who worked without compensation) and nurses of the Hospital. The Sisters of St. Ann endorsed this plan and the Hospital Board approved subsidization for these students.

From 1962 to 1968, there was a constant stream of letters between the Sisters in Smithers and Victoria imploring that a new modern facility was needed and that the original 1934 building should be completely abandoned. By 1968, the Provincial Council of the Sisters of St. Ann met in Victoria, B.C., to discuss their future in Smithers. Mother Superior Kathleen Moroney advised the BC Health Minister, the mayor of Smithers, and the secretary of the Bulkley-Nechako Regional Hospital District that the Sisters of St. Ann would relinquish control of the Hospital by June 1969. The Bulkley Valley District Hospital Society was then formed and negotiations regarding the transfer to the new Society were undertaken.

While the transfer of ownership happened on October 30, 1969, most nuns did not leave until June 1969.

In 1973 the Bulkley Valley District Hospital launched a building a renovation project, planning to add a major wing with new facilities for many departments while renovating a portion of the 1955 wing. The original 1934 Hospital building was demolished.

The formation of the Bulkley Lodge Society through the Smithers Society of Concerned Citizens in 1982, replaced the need for extended care beds in the BV District Hospital, reducing the number of beds needed in the Hospital. Today, the Hospital acts as an acute care facility with 25 beds, servicing communities from Houston to Hazelton, B.C.

Custodial History

Records that were created both by the original Board of Directors (1920 – 1934) and Sisters of St. Ann (1933-1969) were passed on and kept by management until their donation to the Archives. Records in this collection from the Ladies' Auxiliary were kept by Jean Maskiewich whose sister-in-law, Jean Kilpatrick, was the former Treasurer of the Auxiliary. Maskiewich then donated these records to the Archives. Three photographs (P7894-P7896) were found in collections in October 2020, having been submitted to the Interior News prior to 2003 and transferred to the museum at an unknown date.

Scope and Content

Fonds is organized into seven series:

1. Administrative
2. Board of Trustees
3. Sisters of St. Ann
4. Bulkley Valley District Hospital Ladies' Auxiliary
5. Bulkley Valley District Hospital Society
6. Construction and engineering records
7. Legal records

Other records not organized under these series include a reports and orders ledger, a physician's journal and day book, donations for the Hospital's first x-ray machine, x-ray reports, event programs, a photograph, and donations for a L.B. Warner memorial.

Many photographs of the BV District Hospital can also be found in the BVM Visual Records Collection.

Immediate Acquisition:

- 1986.7: Bulkley Valley District Hospital, 1986
- 1992.9: Pat McCammon, July 7, 1992
- 1997.51: Jean Maskiewich, June 19, 1997
- 2004.20: Mollie Ralston, July 31, 2003
- 2007.3: K.C. Moore on behalf of L.B. Warner, June 22, 2007
- 2017.25: Bulkley Valley District Hospital, May 4, 2017
- 2017.36: Found in collection, June 8, 2017
- 2017.53: Louis Schibli, October 23, 2005

- 2020.36: Found in collection, October 2020

Administrative

Series no.: **S1**

Part of: Bulkley Valley District Hospital fonds

Related accessions: 1986.7; 2007.3; 2017.25

Physical description: 1 cm of textual records

Date range: 1920-1921; 1923; 1933

Scope and content

Records relate to the administrative activities or functions of the Bulkley Valley District Hospital. Records include annual reports and a financial statement for 1933.

Board of Trustees

Series no.: **S2**

Part of: Bulkley Valley District Hospital fonds

Related accessions: 1992.9; 1986.7; 2017.25

Physical description: 2.5 cm of textual records

Date range: [1920; 1926-1986]

Scope and content

Series contains records created by the Board of Trustees of the Bulkley Valley District Hospital. Records include by-laws, meeting minutes, statements of revenues and expenses, miscellaneous letters, British Columbia Health Association activity bulletins, a medical manpower plan and invitations to monthly meetings and the official opening of the expanded hospital.

Sisters of St. Ann

Series no.: **S3**

Part of: Bulkley Valley District Hospital fonds

Related accessions: 1986.7; 2017.25

Physical description: 2.5 cm of textual records

Date range: 1931-1937; 1954

Scope and content

Series contains records reflecting the period of time when the Sisters of St. Ann operated the Bulkley Valley District Hospital. Records include correspondence, donations, insurance records, permits and specifications for a hospital addition, and a bill of sale from the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

Bulkley Valley District Hospital Ladies' Auxiliary

Series no.: **S4**

Part of: Bulkley Valley District Hospital fonds

Related accessions: 1997.51, 2020.36

Physical description: 1 cm of textual records, 2 photographs (P7894, P7896)

Date range: 1927; 1960; [after 1965?], 2001

Administrative History/Bibliographic Sketch

The Bulkley Valley District Hospital Ladies' Auxiliary was formed on June 11, 1920, after the Hospital Board was founded. Mrs. A. Kilpatrick chaired the first meeting and was the first Auxiliary member appointed on the Hospital Board. The first Auxiliary executives included Mrs. James MacDonald (President), Edith O'Neill (Vice President), Mrs. W.F. Boyer (Treasurer), and Mrs. David Jennings (Secretary). Twenty-three women paid their memberships of \$1.00 at the first meeting. From 1920 to 1934, the Auxiliary provided the Hospital with linens, towels, etc., made gowns for surgeons and nurses, pneumonia jackets, bath robes, baby clothes and night shirts, and often helped pay the nurses' salaries. They also hosted fundraising events for necessary furnishings and equipment for both the Hospital and Nurses' Residence.

Scope and content

Series include records created or collected by the Ladies' Auxiliary, including donations and hospital accounts, a history of the Ladies' Auxiliary, and 2 photographs.

Bulkley Valley District Hospital Society

Series no.: **S5**

Part of: Bulkley Valley District Hospital fonds

Related accessions: 2017.25

Physical description: 5 cm of textual records.

Date range: 1975-1981

Scope and content

Records in this series reflect the activities and functions of the Bulkley Valley District Hospital Society. Records include annual reports and membership cheques.

Construction and engineering records

Series no.: **S6**

Part of: Bulkley Valley District Hospital fonds

Related accessions: 2017.25

Physical description: 2.5 cm of textual records; 6 architectural drawings; 1 technical drawing

Date range: [193-]-1954

Scope and content

Series includes records pertaining to architectural and engineering work done on the Bulkley Valley District Hospital. Series includes architectural drawings, engineering drawings, a schedule of hardware, and Whittaker & Wagg records for an addition to the Hospital in 1954. Whittaker & Wagg records include material specifications, electrical specifications, correspondence and an architectural drawing.

Legal records

Series no.: **S7**

Part of: Bulkley Valley District Hospital fonds

Related accessions: 1986.7

Physical description: 1.5 cm of textual records.

Date range: [1933-1941]

Scope and content

Series includes records pertaining to lawsuits involving the Bulkley Valley District Hospital.

Reproduction restrictions

Some restrictions may apply.

General assembly main section switchboard

Item no.: **2017.25.1**

Part of: Constructive and engineering records series

Date range: n.d.

Location: Map cabinet 2; drawer 4

Scope and content

Item is an architectural drawing by A.G. Third & Co. Ltd. for a main section switchboard for the Bulkley Valley District Hospital.

Bed pan cabinets

Item no.: **2017.25.2**

Part of: Constructive and engineering records series

Date range: n.d.

Location: Map cabinet 2; drawer 4

Scope and content

Item is an architectural drawing for bed pan cabinets by Westeel Products Ltd. in a proposed addition to the Bulkley Valley District Hospital.

Sisters of St. Ann Hospital

Item no.: **2017.25.3; 2017.25.4; 2017.25.5**

Part of: Constructive and engineering records series

Date range: [193-]

Location: Map cabinet 2; drawer 4

Scope and content

File includes three architectural drawings by Henry Whittaker for the Sisters of St. Ann Hospital, including south, front and back elevations.

Bulkley Valley District Hospital addition

Item no.: **2017.25.6**

Part of: Constructive and engineering records series

Date range: [1954]

Location: Map cabinet 2; drawer 4

Scope and content

Item is an architectural drawing by Henry Whittaker for an addition to the Bulkley Valley Hospital for the Sisters of St. Ann.

Sketch of Nurses' Residence

Item no.: **2017.25.7**

Part of: Constructive and engineering records series

Date range: [1923]

Location: Map cabinet 2; drawer 4

Scope and content

Item is an architectural drawing by Whittaker & Waggs for a Nurses' Residence for the Sisters of St. Ann.