



A source of pride for area residents

## Residents gathered to salute St. Andrew's

Area residents gathered in April at the Country Mill to salute the new Huronia District Hospital and to say farewell to the old St. Andrew's Hospital.

Stan Martin, former Deputy Minister of Health and present chairman of the Ontario Council, termed the new hospital "a sophisticated house of healing" in his address to the 265 people.

Martin stressed that the continually rising costs of health care have put the government into a health funding dilemma. "The government spends almost \$400 per man, woman and child in this province for health care," said Martin. "And yet we are just as unhealthy as we ever were."

"We cannot buy health," he said. "There is a need for personal responsibility for personal health, as that applies to the misuse of tobacco, alcohol, and the driving of automobiles."

He praised the spirit of cooperation that was evidenced in the building of the \$11 million hospital. "Future effective administration will depend on continued cooperation."

Martin, who was introduced by MPP Gord Smith and thanked by Dr. James Small, was one of several speakers at the head table.

Dr. F.A. Grise proposed a toast to the ladies of the hospital auxiliary.

Auxiliary president Mrs. Bert Nicholls reminded the audience that Huronia was the site of the first hospital and the first pharmacy in Ontario at Saint Marie

Among the Hurons. "For this reason," she said, "I consider the name Huronia District Hospital to be the most appropriate."

Board secretary and auxiliary member, Mrs. Rena Bell gave a brief history of hospitals in Midland, and noted that the Midland Marine Hospital (which was built in Sunnyside in 1909) cost just \$6,700.

The decorations for the dinner were created by Lev Hunter, whose four large paintings of the Marine Hospital, the Chew-Playfair building, the present St. Andrew's and the new facility of the town's western limits, were the focal point and theme of the evening. The large framed pictures will be hung in the new hospital when it is open.

### Way back when

## "We were all like one big happy family then"

When Miss Emma Baker was the superintendent of the original Midland Penitentiary, she supervised everything in the 12-bed hospital.

If the cook had a day off, Miss Baker took over at the wood stove in the kitchen. She attended to the mending in her spare moments. Her evenings were often spent in the kitchen as she made pickles and preserves for the patients. She ordered supplies and on occasion mopped floors. She supervised nurses and patients and was on call 24 hours a day. For this she was paid about \$100 per month.

But then, the daily rate for ward patients was fifty cents. Those in private rooms paid \$1.50.

Miss Baker's prime concern was the well-being of her patients and she took this seriously. One night, a thyroid patient was restless. Her sleep had been disturbed by one of the hospital cows which had wandered close to the building, its

cow bell swinging. Miss Baker took a dim view of such noisy goings-on. She rose from her bed, got a carving knife from the kitchen and marched out to the offending cow and cut off the bell. She did the same to the other bovine wanderers.

When Miss Baker retired in 1942, after 30 years of service, she wrote down some of her memories of the early days in the three storey brick building which was the forerunner of our present St. Andrew's Hospital.

The building was erected in 1903 for \$6,700, and there was a fireplace in each of the two public wards. There were 12 beds in the hospital. The nurses and the maid lived on the top floor. A circular drive led up to the building and there were flower beds, cared for by the Midland Horticultural Society.

There was no nursery, because most babies were born at home. Those who did arrive in hospital either stayed in the room with the mothers, or were

kept in baskets in the shelves of the linen room. If there was an overflow, dresser drawers were pressed into service.

The first baby born in the Midland Penitentiary was Chris Foster. Born on March 2, 1906, Mr. Foster now lives on a farm in the rural area.

In those early days, there was no steriliser. Miss Baker described sterilising methods this way: "We used a wash boiler and tied cotton to each handle and placed the wrapped goods inside. We held the lid down with a flat iron. We let everything boil for one hour and then put the bundles in the oven of the wood stove to dry out overnight."

"We had two large tin cans with spouts for sterile water. One was boiled at night, and the other in the daytime, so we always had hot and cold sterile water."

A hospital auxiliary was established in 1906 and these ladies furnished many of the rooms. When the kitchen was moved from the second floor down to the basement, a dumb-waiter lift was added to ease the work load of the nurses.

Doctors who worked in the first hospital were Dr. Raikes, Dr. McGill, Dr. MacDonald, Dr. Tanner, Dr. Walbridge, Dr. Clark, Dr. Johnston, Dr. McPhee and Dr. Spohn and his son Dr. Howard Spohn.

"They were all wonderful," said Miss Baker, "and so were the nurses. We were all like one big happy family."

In those days, when most water came from wells, typhoid was a serious problem. A small frame house was bought, and put on the property next door to the hospital to form an overflow isolation ward.

In 1914, James Playfair donated the spacious Manley Chew home on Bay Street to be used as a hospital. Because of the view of the water, it reminded him of his ancestral Scottish home, St. Andrew's by the Sea, and his only stipulation

was that the new hospital be named St. Andrew's.

The hospital inspector suggested a few changes in the building and the gradual moving of furniture and patients began.

The post war epidemic of influenza struck Midland in 1918 and the new hospital was filled to overflowing. Ships arrived in Midland with desperately ill crews and there was no place to put them.

Many patients were bedded down in Midland's public schools. The townspeople rallied to the emergency by cooking great pots of soup which they brought to the hospital.

Said Miss Baker, "the doctors were so busy we hardly saw them. Through God's great mercy and help, we were able to carry on." One nurse, Miss Atkinson, died in the epidemic.

In the post war years, a rum-running ship was caught in Midland harbour. The alcoholic cargo was confiscated by the local police who gave it to

the private patients. There were chickens too, to assure patients of a supply of fresh eggs.

There were other big doings in 1922. The first electric range was installed and a new south wing added, and opened by Royalty.

The official St. Andrew's opening had been delayed by the flu epidemic.

The Duke of Devonshire and his daughter-in-law the Duchess of Devonshire officiated, and the Duke's aide-de-camp was a gentleman called Harold MacMillain, who later became Prime Minister of Great Britain.

Emma Baker's name was commemorated in the opening of the new west wing in 1936. The sod was turned by Lord Tweedsmuir.

The newest part of the hospital was opened in 1955 and in 1956 the renovated older part, named the James Playfair wing, was opened.

Now the 101 bed hospital on Dominion Avenue is part of history.

# The New Staff



Susan Jennings  
Respiratory Technologist



Yvonne Wells  
Admitting Officer



Marie Joyner  
Discharge Planning Coordinator



Jean Baker  
Director of Nursing



Lorna Davis  
Co-ordinator special areas



Esko Vainio  
Assistant Administrator



Robert Morton  
Personnel Manager



Norma Peel  
Director Medical Record Department



Beulah Bramah  
Administrative Supervisor Pharmacy



Edward Rusiewicz  
Head x-ray



Ruly Boyce  
Head of recovery



Linda Dumais  
Head of OR



Patricia Plaus  
Co-ordinator Medical, chronic



Brian Alves  
Director of Physical Medicine



Murray Chalk  
Controller



Ruth Jeness  
Head Nurse, OPD, Emergency



Margaret Wilson  
Co-ordinator obs-gyn surgical

To everyone who helped make this day a reality!

Congratulations!

**Agnew-Peckham & Associates**

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Toronto Ont.

**Powers Regulator Company**

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and  
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