

No operating room

First hospital had two wards and four beds

By BECKY MEDICRAFT

The first hospital to serve the Town of Oakville had two wards and four beds. It was used mostly for sickness better treated away from home and for emergency maternity cases. There was no operating room and the chances of keeping a dying man alive for the hour and a quarter ambulance trip to Toronto were pretty slim.

In 1944 a group of citizens gathered together and managed to raise \$100,000 to build a new hospital. However, at that time, it was thought that construction costs might go down so there was a delay with building plans.

Despite this, the Oakville Lions Club formed a committee to establish and run a temporary hospital located on Second Street.

This was indeed an improvement over the original hospital, but it was still barely adequate. The elevator, which was the only way to get supplies from the basement to third floor surgery was constantly breaking down, the wails of hungry babies at feeding time could be heard through the entire building, and there was no oxygen tents.

In 1948, the Lions Club turned the hospital back to the original board in hopes that something else might be done.

The citizens of Oakville were well aware of the fact that a new hospital was needed, so it soon became a community project. Through the efforts of J. Dunwoody, R.C.A. Cumberland, Arnold Banfield, Casey Wood, and T.S. Gairdner, \$125,000 was raised.

Their efforts and determination paid off and the Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital opened in 1949. A giant landscaping bee was held to beautify the grounds, and its growth since then has been outstanding.

From 1951-55 the bed capacity was increased by 32 per cent without the aid of public funding and, because of its rapid growth, the need to enlarge the hospital was drastically felt in 1955. Patients had to be taken to Hamilton and Toronto for lack of space.

The new four-storey addition cost almost \$2 million and the number of staff, beds, and bassinets doubled. The payroll went from \$147,000 to \$580,000.

In 1969, the hospital reduced its patient days by a substantial number from

93,887 to 90,260. This was accomplished by decreasing the average length of stay which was approximately 9.4 days. Occupancy percentages were reduced in each department and made breathing space more possible.

A 1970 hospital report indicated the need for an immediate development of an in-patient psychiatry program and some facilities for long term care. It also stated that it would be necessary to enlarge the hospital 150 beds for approximately 1980 and that the diagnostic departments were in need of expansion.

Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital has come a long way since 1944 and is still on the upswing. It has gone from 4 beds to 363, and serves the town and its citizens well.

Under 1 year
old...
Impossible

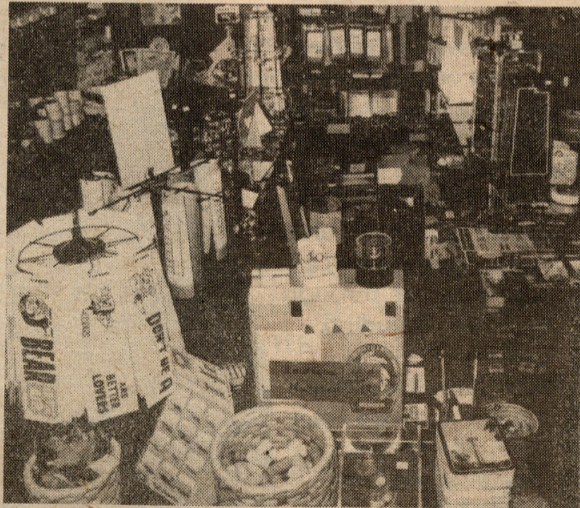
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