

## EARLY TUBERCULOSIS IN NOVA SCOTIA

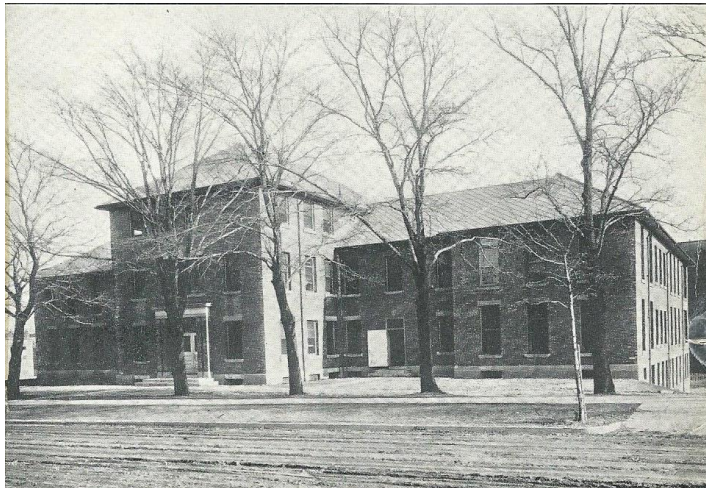
By Gloria Stephens 2017

**1891- The Tuberculosis (TB) HOSPITAL-** Dr. D.A. Campbell started the isolation of TB patients at the VG hospital, Halifax, in 1891 as he found out that the TB bacillus was an infectious disease. This was called 'Consumption' many years ago. The TB bacillus was isolated by Dr. Koch who also devised the tuberculin injection. This was a major advance in medicine for the public's health. Dr. MacDonald conducted classes in the treatment of TB patients to nurses at the VG hospital from 1911 for several years.

Mildred Holloway (H. Hall), VG class of 1909, was the first Receptionist at the TB Hospital. She also nursed at the Infectious Disease Hospital, in Halifax. Mildred was a founding member and first president of the VG School of Nursing Alumni in 1920.



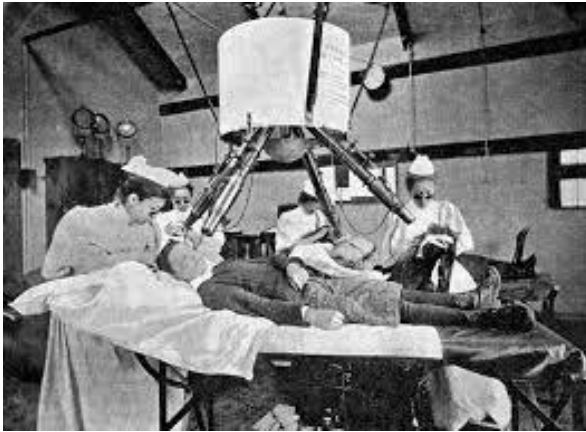
Josephine Landry (Hanway), VG class 1906, reorganized the TB Society in Cumberland Co. which resulted in building a 16 bed unit to the Highland View Hospital in Amherst, NS. During WW2 she was Provincial Chairman of the Red Cross Women's War Work Committee, plus In-Charge of the Red Cross Emergency Hospital Units and supplies. At the end of WW2 she organized and chaired the committee promoting 13 Red Cross Outpost Hospitals in NS. Josephine was awarded the King George V Jubilee Medal, 1935; the King George VI Coronation Medal 1937 and the OBE (MBE) in 1943. A son, Squadron Leader J.A. Hanway AFG was killed during WW2. Josephine died January 22, 1968 at age 84 in Montreal.



A second TB Hospital was built in 1921, on Morris Street, to treat post-war (WW1) veterans who returned from overseas, having the disease. The place was also referred to as the Morris Street hospital. This hospital was managed by the City Charities Committee until 1935; then the City Health Board & City Medical Officer until 1940, after which it was managed by the Committee of Public Health & Welfare. The TB, Morris Street hospital was closed in 1959 when the patients diagnosed with TB were sent to the Sanatorium in Kentville, NS.

Here is a patient receiving care by a nurse with a doctor present.

Patients were given heat treatments by a large light as shown in this picture.



Here is an x-ray machine being demonstrated to nurses, used specifically for TB patients at the Morris Street hospital,



DR GEORGE MURPHY

In 1930 when Dr. George Murphy was Minister of Health (1930-1933) he brought in the 'Anti-TB Program'. He also established the Provincial Public Health Nursing Program at Dalhousie University, 1932.

Dr. Paul Nonamaker received his 'Specialist's Certification' in Thoracic Surgery in 1951 from the Royal College and became one of the pioneers in thoracic surgery in Atlantic Canada. His early thoracic surgery was performed at the Halifax TB hospital on Morris Street. Thorocoplasty was the surgery performed to try to stop the spread of the disease. This was not always successful and seriously deformed the patient's torso. After 1957 all TB surgery was performed at the 'San'. Dr. Nonamaker then established the first service for Thoracic Surgery at the VG hospital and became Chief of the Department, which he held for 20 years.



DR. PAUL NONAMAKER

In 1904 the most urgent health-related need in Canada was home care for TB folks as the regular hospitals would not knowingly admitted patients infected with TB. The VON nurses filled this need for 'Home Care' to the detriment of their own health. They distributed pamphlets trying to educate the public in dealing with TB and self-prevention.

Nova Scotia led the way in Canada by building sanatoriums and isolating TB patients. At first only admitted patients diagnosed with 'incipient TB' because only this type thought to be 'curable'. Early diagnosis was difficult but by 1940 and the 1950's the incidence of TB was on the decline. Patients not only suffered from the disease but often lost jobs, shunned by neighbours and friend and some even abandoned by their physicians who were discouraged by the long illness and not able to help them. A story has been written that one discouraged patient in 1915 shot his doctor and then himself for not being cured.

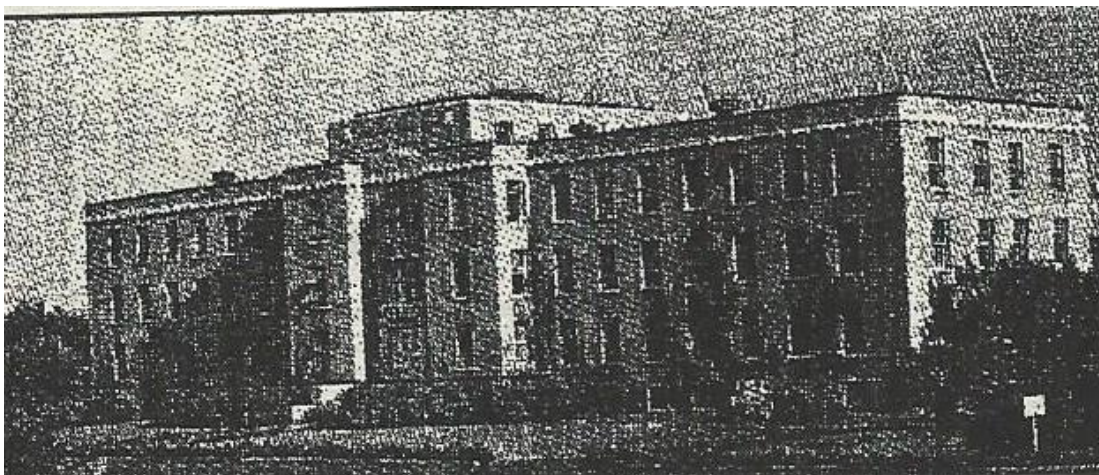
**The 'San' in Kentville** accepted affiliate nursing students from Halifax hospitals, for experience in nursing the TB patient.

Ernest Frederick "Buddy" Boudreau was a graduate of the VG School of Nursing in the class of 1929. Following graduation he nursed at the Kentville 'San'. He said that he received \$5 dollars a month more than female nurses in order to keep him employed there, even though he and the female nurses did the same work. As a 'staff nurse' he had twelve patients confined to bed who required total nursing care each day. During WW2 he was a member of the Army Medical Corps and served overseas. On return he rejoined the San staff in Charge of the Pavilion and soon became Supervisor of the 'old Infirmary' and the Children's Annex. Ernest nursed the 12 hour night shift for 22 years. He retired in 1969 and lived his life in Florida.



ERNEST BOUDREAU

The original Kentville Sanatorium opened in 1903 and among its earlier patients were soldiers who returned home from WW1 with TB. A new facility was opened in 1932, considered at the time to be 'World Class' and operated until 1979. Because treatment for TB took a long time, patients lived at the San for several years. At one time the facility boasted its own radio station, newspaper called the 'Health Rags' and a post office.



The writer's Aunt Myrtle K. Wentzell spent a year in a public ward at the VG hospital, Halifax with no improvement and with the insistence of her sister, Vida was transferred to the San where she spent a considerable time and returned home improved.

MEDICAL DIVISION  
 VICTORIA GENERAL HOSPITAL  
 Halifax, N.S.

Reg. No. 7701  
 Disc. No. 440

Patient's Name Mrs Myrtle Wentzell Address 12 Arundale Rd.  
 Dr. to VICTORIA GENERAL HOSPITAL

DATE	TO 13	DAYS HOSPITAL TREATMENT		
	FROM May 21	TO June 3 @ 2 1/2	26	00

You are discharged from Hospital Unimproved  
 H.A. MacIntosh, M.C.D. Supt.  
 open Nov 8

While in the San, Myrtle wrote many poems and one being:

ODE TO THE SAN", June 1939.

*The sun is shining down upon the Valley,  
 Across the apple orchards blow the gentle breeze,  
 For it is June and at the NS Sanatorium,  
 You find Peace and Rest, all nature in tune.*

*No sounds are heard save those of happy bird-songs,  
 Who've built their nests among the shady trees.  
 Here oft from the city, town and country,  
 Come men and women who have sought release  
 For tired bodies, and 'tis here they come for healing  
 And in our 'SAN' they find relief.*

NOVA SCOTIA SANATORIUM

No. ....  
 Date June 28 1939  
 For Myrtle Wentzell

Rx  
 Felix Trifolii Prunidos ʒss  
 Tr. Stramon Mxv  
 Pulvis Sadic ʒss  
 Tr. Lobelia Mxv  
 aq chlorofumi ʒiv  
 M ʒvi  
 Sig: ʒiv in water  
 Tid per hs  
 Physician

be left at the Drug Room  
 Infirmary Building

S. 21-3M-2-34 149899  
 Kinley

*So, to this grand and noble Institution  
 Folks come from nearly every walk of life,  
 Their ills are cured and they have found new friends  
 They sing the song "Bless Be The Tide That Binds"  
 For here in this old NS Sanatorium,  
 They've found a quiet, peaceful, restful state of mind.*

A "Celebration of the San", was held in October 26, 2003, in recognition of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its opening and the above poem was printed in the program. The hymn mentioned in Myrtle's poem was sung as well.