

Princess Alexandra Hospital for Contagious Diseases Verdun

Notes from Wanda on the Princess Alexandra Hospital research process:

I first found mention of this hospital on this website: **A Canadian Family**

<https://acanadianfamily.wordpress.com/2012/01/01/pointe-st-charles-montreal-alexandra-hospital-historical-sanatorium-infectious-diseases-tuberculosis/>

That led me to the comments section, which I have reprinted below, that features an exchange of emails with visitors to the site and a young researcher called Kiley Goyette.

I later got in touch with Kiley and she offered me her research paper on the life of nurses at the hospital. Her paper on the hospital itself is undergoing some updating and revision, so is unavailable at this time. Do please check back.

14 Comments » Retrieved from **A Canadian Family** post (see above) on February 2, 2018

1. Hi. I am writing a paper on the Alexandra Hospital and can fill in a few blanks for you. When the hospital first opened it was dedicated to children (although it also treated adults) mainly measles, scarlet fever and diphtheria (croup). But it would also take various other diseases, including polio and chickenpox. They only opened a tuberculosis unit in 1948 but it closed in the 1960s (which is also when the hospital stopped taking contagious disease cases). Finally, the “Alexandra Hospital today” is social housing not condos! The only buildings recycled from the original hospital buildings were the nurses residences and administration building.

Anyways that is just a brief note but if you want any more info let me know!

Like



Comment by **Kiley** | December 9, 2015 | [Reply](#)

•Hi, I am a member of la Société d’histoire de Pointe-Saint-Charles. We have very little infos about Alexandra Hospital. Can we see your paper ? It may be a good idea to insert it in our next Bulletin. Many thanks in advance,

Like



Comment by **Nathacha** | February 17, 2016 | [Reply](#)

•Hi Nathacha! I am sorry I missed your note from so long ago now! I would be happy to send you the current draft of the paper but there are a few changes I hope to make before sharing it with the grand

public. - -

Like



Comment by **Kiley** | October 11, 2016 | [Reply](#)

•Hi Kiley,

Learning history is a slow process requiring a lot of patience... so, I am used to wait! I'll send you the same message on your Email...in case...

Like

 Comment by [Nathacha Alexandroff](#) | October 11, 2016 | [Reply](#)

•
•Hi Kiley – I am trying to find out more information about the Alexandra Hospital in the Pointe. On August 16, 1966 our 5 week old daughter had to be hospitalized there for whooping cough. They took very good care of her, and she was able to come home on October 8, 1966 But I'd like to know more about it. My only memory of it was that I was allowed to visit her once a week for an hour, but when I got there the first week, a nurse was holding her behind a rope barrier and I was not allowed to touch her. Not an easy situation. I'd love to hear back from you. Thank you.

Nancy Stewart

Like

 Comment by Nancy Stewart | October 10, 2016 | [Reply](#)

•Hi Nancy! wow this is a very interesting story! This would have been one of the last years that the hospital was treating contagious diseases (they stopped taking contagious disease cases in 1968). If you are in Montreal, McGill University has the annual reports, which are actually quite descriptive and you might find them interesting. There is also a picture of children the whooping cough ward from 1937 at the BANQ website http://pistard.banq.qc.ca/unite_chercheurs/description_fonds?p_anqsid=201511061133241211&p_centre=06M&p_classe=P&p_fonds=48&p_numunide=804237 (click "voir images:1"). Feel free to send me an email if you would like to correspond more about the hospital, I can also send you a draft of my paper: kileygoyette@gmail.com

Like

 Comment by [Kiley](#) | October 11, 2016 | [Reply](#)

•Hello Kiley!

I'm not very active on the site right now due to other life commitments, however thanks for interacting with people who leave comments. If you want to write an actual post in order to collect more information or share more information, please feel free!

Either way, thanks again.

Evelyn

Like

 Comment by Evelyn Yvonne Theriault | October 11, 2016 | [Reply](#)

•
•Thanks for the information about the Alexandra hospital in the Pointe. I was a patient there in 1953. I was 5 years old and had rheumatic fever. I don't remember much about my stay there. I do remember that I couldn't bring any of my stuffed animals (gifts) home as they were to be burned.

Like

 Comment by Heather Hebert | September 22, 2017 | [Reply](#)

•
2.Now it is a low-income subsidized housing.

Like

 Comment by Janson | April 15, 2016 | [Reply](#)

3. I was a student nurse at “The Alex” for 6 weeks during the summer of 1963. I well remember the children with whooping cough and I know we had at least one infant who was only five weeks old! I also took care of several children suffering from severe impetigo. First thing in the morning a nurse would have to scrub the lesions to remove scabs before applying an ointment. It was heart rending to have to make a child go through the process.

This comment is now a post – “The Alex” by Catherine Cormier [<http://wp.me/pp92w-iVj>]

Like

 Comment by Catherine Cormier | May 31, 2017 | [Reply](#)

- Thank you for this great information Catherine Cormier!
I have turned it into a post of its own
Evelyn

Like

 Comment by Evelyn Yvonne Theriault | May 31, 2017 | [Reply](#)

- This is amazing Catherine! I would love to add your story to my paper!

Your description of the dining room with Mrs McLeod is very similar to the memories of Katherine Snow, a student at the Alex in the 1938! She wrote a letter to the Gazette in 1992. I can send it to you by email if you are interested.

Like

 Comment by Kiley | May 31, 2017 | [Reply](#)

- Kiley, hello!
I hadn't looked at this post in awhile and had forgotten that you were researching the Alexandra. I could reprint your original comment as a stand-alone post so that it might draw more attention. If you're interested I can use what you said above unless you would like to add a little bit more. Then if people contact me I would forward them your email address.
Evelyn

Like

 Comment by Evelyn Yvonne Theriault | May 31, 2017 | [Reply](#)

- Hi Evelyn,
It has been great that so many people visiting your site have shared their experiences at the hospital!! I love it!!
Thank you for putting my comment in the post. I would love to send something more detailed, but I really don't have time right now. I do have a short write-up that I made for a poster project; I can send you the text and images if you want. Please email me at: kileygoyette@gmail.com

Like

 Comment by Kiley | June 1, 2017 | [Reply](#)

Email exchange with Kiley Goyette:

See companion Word doc "More about the Alex"

Further info on the Alex

Source: <https://acanadianfamily.wordpress.com/2017/05/31/the-alex-by-catherine-cormier/>

“The Alex” by Catherine Cormier



A few years ago I published this vintage postcard of [Alexandra Hospital in Pointe-St-Charles](#) (and a related post about [Queen Alexandra](#)). Catherine Cormier was generous enough to share these lovely (though poignant) memories of her time there as a student nurse. Thank you so much!

Guest Post by Catherine Cormier

I was a student nurse at “The Alex” for 6 weeks during the summer of 1963. I well remember the children with whooping cough and I know we had at least one infant who was only five weeks old! I also took care of several children suffering from severe impetigo. First thing in the morning a nurse would have to scrub the lesions to remove scabs before applying an ointment. It was heart rending to have to make a child go through the process.

Tuberculosis was largely treated outside the hospitals in those days. With the discovery of antibiotics TB treatment had become possible in the community. An old iron lung was demonstrated for the students. There was one TB patient left – a little boy of 3 or 4 years who lived at the hospital. He had been sent, for treatment, from the far north a year or more before. Although he had recovered there was some problem in sending him home so he just lived in the hospital and was thoroughly institutionalized, but the pet of the staff.

Miss Jenny Wren was the much feared, martinet of a head nurse on one ward. Woe betide the student who did not meet her standards!

Miss Winnifred McLeod, a graduate of the Royal Victoria Hospital, was the Director of Nursing. We students had our meals in the Nurses’ Dining Room and I remember we could not be seated until Miss McLeod swept majestically in to the room, (followed by her staff), led us in Grace, and took her seat. We could not leave until Miss McLeod stood and signalled that the meal was over. I believe that we students generally liked and respected Miss McLeod.

“The Alex” had its own ambulance; a battered green van sited for patient transport. Louis, the driver, loved his ambulance and drove at top speed, frequently the wrong way on one-way streets, with the siren blaring! I have vivid memories of a trip to the Montreal Children’s Hospital to pick up a child with measles. It was a harrowing trip with Louis obviously enjoying himself as he drove like a mad man!

“The Alex” was an interesting place for a student nurse in that summer of 1963.

Hospital Plans - The Alex - McGill University

Source:

<http://cac.mcgill.ca/maxwells/details.php?Page=&id=250&pn=&cn=all&pr=all&ct=all&str=&mj=all&mn=all&sta=built>

Retrieved: April 18, 2018

Alexandra Hospital for Infectious Diseases([1904-11])

[220-240] Charon Street, Montreal [Pointe-Saint-Charles], QC, Canada

Health, *Hospital [administration building, 3 pavilions, ambulance and mortuary building, laundry and power house, kitchen building, observation ward, and nurses' home]; brick; wall bearing*

Client: Alexandra Hospital

Architect: E. & W.S. Maxwell

Description: Alexandra Hospital was the infectious diseases institution for the English speaking community. Located at the southern edge of Pointe-Saint-Charles, a working-class neighbourhood in south-west Montreal near Verdun, its pavilions were distributed on a triangular site between Charon Street and railroad tracks, not far from Saint-Gabriel Farm, one of the oldest buildings on the island. Control of contagious diseases involved, according to medical principles of that time, isolating

patients in dedicated wards and minimising points of access while providing maximum air circulation and sun. The three main wards (each occupying 2 floors as male and female patients were placed on the ground and first floor respectively), for treatment of measles, diphtheria and scarlet fever are connected by inclined covered passageways to the kitchen pavilion, behind the administration building facing Charon Street. Two smaller pavilions on either side and the emergency and mortuary building make up the public edge of the complex while the power and laundry building are backed up against the railway berm to the south. The hospital still exist but underwent major renovations; new streets (Frank Selke, Dick Irvin) criss-cross the site.

Holdings: Hospital (administration building, 3 pavilions, ambulance and mortuary building, laundry and power house, kitchen building, observation ward, and nurses'home); brick; wall bearing
160 Drawings: 127 ink on linen; 11 ink on paper; 21 pencil on paper; 1 watercolour on paper
5 Survey drawings: property plan, grid point elevations, ground sections
2 Sketch drawings: elevations 1 Presentation drawing: elevation 28 Development drawings: site plan, floor plans, elevations, sections, kitchen, boiler and laundry blocks, observation ward and nurses' home 65 Working drawings: administration building: floor plans, elevations, structure; scarlet fever and measles pavilions: floor plans, attic floor plans, roof plans, elevations, structure; diphtheria pavilion: floor plans, attic floor plans, roof plans, elevations, sections, structure; mixed cases ward: foundation plan, floor plans, elevations, structure; kitchen block: floor plans, roof plans, elevations, structure; observation pavilion, laundry and power buildings, ambulance and mortuary blocks: plans, elevations, sections 58 Detail drawings: property plan, floor plans, elevations, sections, boiler house, cart shed, ice house, isolation pavilion, disinfecting chamber, cold chamber, pantry, entries, structure, heating system, incinerators, acetylene generator, stairs, ventilating flues, mantelpieces, windows, doors, dumbwaiter, stable fittings 1 Consultant drawing: lot plan

Comments: 2 blueprints of Boston General Hospital layout, dated 1895, were found and are filed with project. 1 drawing by Joseph Rielle, Q.L.S., dated 8/10/1903, is included.