

A Guide to the

Cottage Hospitals *fonds*

COLL-092

Arranged and Described by:

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Faculty of Medicine Founders' Archives

Health Sciences Library

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Title: Cottage Hospital *fonds*

Date: 1980's

Extent: m of textual records

Administrative History:

The Cottage Hospital system was first introduced in 1934 to Newfoundland and Labrador, providing residents in the outport communities, access to hospital and medical services. Costs to individuals for services ranged from \$5 to \$7 per annum or \$15 per family.

The Cottage Hospital system was derived from the recommendations of the 1930 Royal Commission of Health Care and Public Charities and echoed in the Amulree Commission's 1933 report, which also recommended the Commission of Government. The Cottage Hospital system was loosely modeled after the system of health care in rural Scotland, which had scattered and oftentimes isolated residents.

There were nineteen cottage hospitals operating across Newfoundland from 1936 to 1954. The Northern Peninsula along with Labrador's cottage hospitals were serviced by the hospitals and nursing stations of the Grenfell Association. The first cottage hospitals to officially open in 1936 were located in Argentia, Old Perlican, Markland, Burgeo, Harbour Breton, Come by Chance and Burin. Stephenville Crossing opened in 1937, Bonavista and Bonne Bay opened in 1940, Grand Bank opened in 1941, and Placentia opened in 1942 to replace the cottage hospital in Argentia, which was expropriated to make way for the American naval base. The next lot of cottage hospitals to operate were located in Brookfield, which opened in 1944, and Gander and Botwood, which opened in 1946. The first cottage hospital to be constructed by the new provincial government following Newfoundland joining Canada in 1949 was the cottage hospital in Channel-Port aux Basques that began accepting patients in 1952. Cottage hospitals also opened in Fogo and Springdale in the same year. The final cottage hospital opened in 1954 in St. Lawrence and was known as the United States Memorial Hospital. It was constructed with \$400,000 which was donated by the United States government following a campaign set up by survivors of the February 1942 sinking of the Truxtun and Pollux.

Cottage hospitals were staffed by at least one doctor, several nurses and other support staff. There were male and female wards along with private and isolation rooms. Most cottage hospitals had X-ray machines. Routine surgeries such as appendectomies or tonsillectomies were performed onsite but more serious surgeries were sent to larger hospitals in either St. John's or Corner Brook. Maternity care was a central focus of the cottage hospitals and most cottage hospitals included nurseries and incubators. The cottage hospitals also doubled as pharmacies to dispense medication.

The cottage hospitals were slowly phased out, paving the way for more modern and centralized medical facilities. Transportation was becoming more accessible thus ending the need for cottage hospitals.

The Cottage Hospital system played an integral role in making access to medical and hospital facilities achievable for isolated and rural residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Custodial history:

The papers were in the custody of Community Health and Humanities. The papers were donated to the Founders' Archive in 2019 by Renee Mercer.

Scope and content:

The papers contain daily accounts from students stationed at the various cottage hospitals across Newfoundland and Labrador in the 1980's.

The fonds is arranged in the following series:

1.0 Cottage Hospitals student papers

Source of title:

Title based on contents of the fonds.

Acquisition:

The student papers were acquired from Renee Mercer of Community Health and Humanities at the Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University, in 2019.

Arrangement:

The student papers are arranged into one series: student papers.

Restrictions:

To be determined.

Accruals:

No further accruals are expected.

Finding Aid:

Series level control.

Series and Sub-series Listing

1.0 Student papers, 1980's

1.01 Student papers, 1980's