



# *Welcome to the Martha Storyboards Virtual Albums!*

*The Martha Storyboards present **highlights** of the Martha Story. For additional historical information, consult James Cameron, [\*And Martha Served\*](#) (2000): [And Martha Served.pdf](#)*

*The stained-glass motifs and vibrant colours of the Storyboards are inspired by the Bethany Chapel Windows [Rambusch of Canada], now located in the [Heritage Gallery](#), Parkland.*

*Except when noted, historical photographs on the Storyboards have been scanned from originals in the [CSM Archives, Bethany Resource Centre](#), Antigonish. Photographs on the Storyboards were edited to fit into the stained-glass designs. The original photographs, with full descriptions, are reproduced in the Storyboards Albums. [Additional information added by archivist, including estimated dates, is indicated by square brackets.]*

*When professed, Sisters chose a [religious name](#). In 1967, Marthas could retain their religious name or revert to their baptismal name and surname. The Albums identify Sisters by both their religious and secular names.*

*The [Notes](#) suggest additional resources that are readily accessible online – many more are available at your local library. Consult the Martha website for information on [current programs and activities](#).*



# “Expert medical attention... and patient, careful, and intelligent nursing”: St. Martha’s Hospital, Antigonish, N.S.

In November 1905, 102 citizens of Antigonish requested a “Cottage Hospital”, managed by the Sisters of St. Martha. The hospital, they hoped, would provide “expert medical attention” and “patient, careful, and intelligent nursing.”

The estimated cost of equipping the new hospital was \$500. The Sisters had no property and little income. They raised the monies within several days, by canvassing door-to-door.

Eight months later, the Sisters opened the Cottage Hospital on St. Ninian Street, Antigonish, in a house rented from Catherine Campbell.

The Sisters provided two trained nurses, Founders Sr. M. Remegius (Laura) MacArthur and Sr. M. Anne (Katie) MacAdam. Already adept in household services, the Marthas also managed the hospital laundry, kitchen, and cleaning duties.

The Cottage Hospital housed six in-patients. During its first year, staff treated more than 100 patients, performed several operations, and halted a typhoid epidemic.



St. Martha's Hospital, Antigonish, N. S.

In 1907 the Sisters purchased “one of the finest residences” in Antigonish, owned by C.E. Harris. Harris House was transformed into St. Martha’s Hospital, a 20-bed facility.

St. Martha’s Hospital included a men’s ward (1st floor), a women’s ward (2nd floor), and a children’s unit (3rd floor). It received hospital accreditation (1922), only the 3rd hospital so recognised east of Montreal.



The Campbell House  
1906



A Garden Party, St. Martha's Hospital (ca 1926)

In 1911, the Sisters opened St. Martha’s Hospital School of Nursing, offering a 3-year program of work and study. In exchange for room and board, student nurses provided free labour.

In collaboration with the Marthas, St. Francis Xavier University created a 5-year BSc in Nursing (1926).



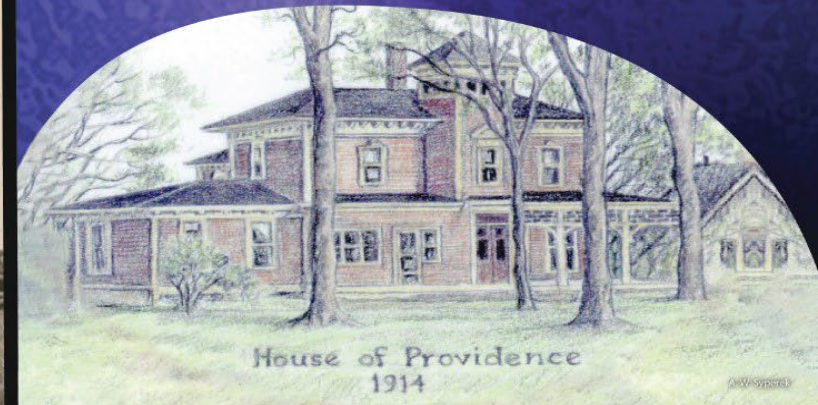
Sr. M. Remegius, First Director  
St. Martha's Hospital  
School of Nursing

St. Martha's Hospital School of Nursing Graduation Class, 1923  
Nelly MacAdam, 2nd from left, later Sr. Mary of the Trinity, served  
26 years as nurse and administrator in four Marthas hospitals.

In 1914 the Marthas purchased a residence for elderly, impoverished women. The House of Providence was administered by Sr. M. Francis (Elizabeth) MacAdam, also a Founder.

Harris House was over-crowded, however, and the mission of Providence House changed. The facility instead accommodated hospital patients, including convalescent veterans (1916-17) and maternity cases (1917-24).

A more spacious hospital was required.



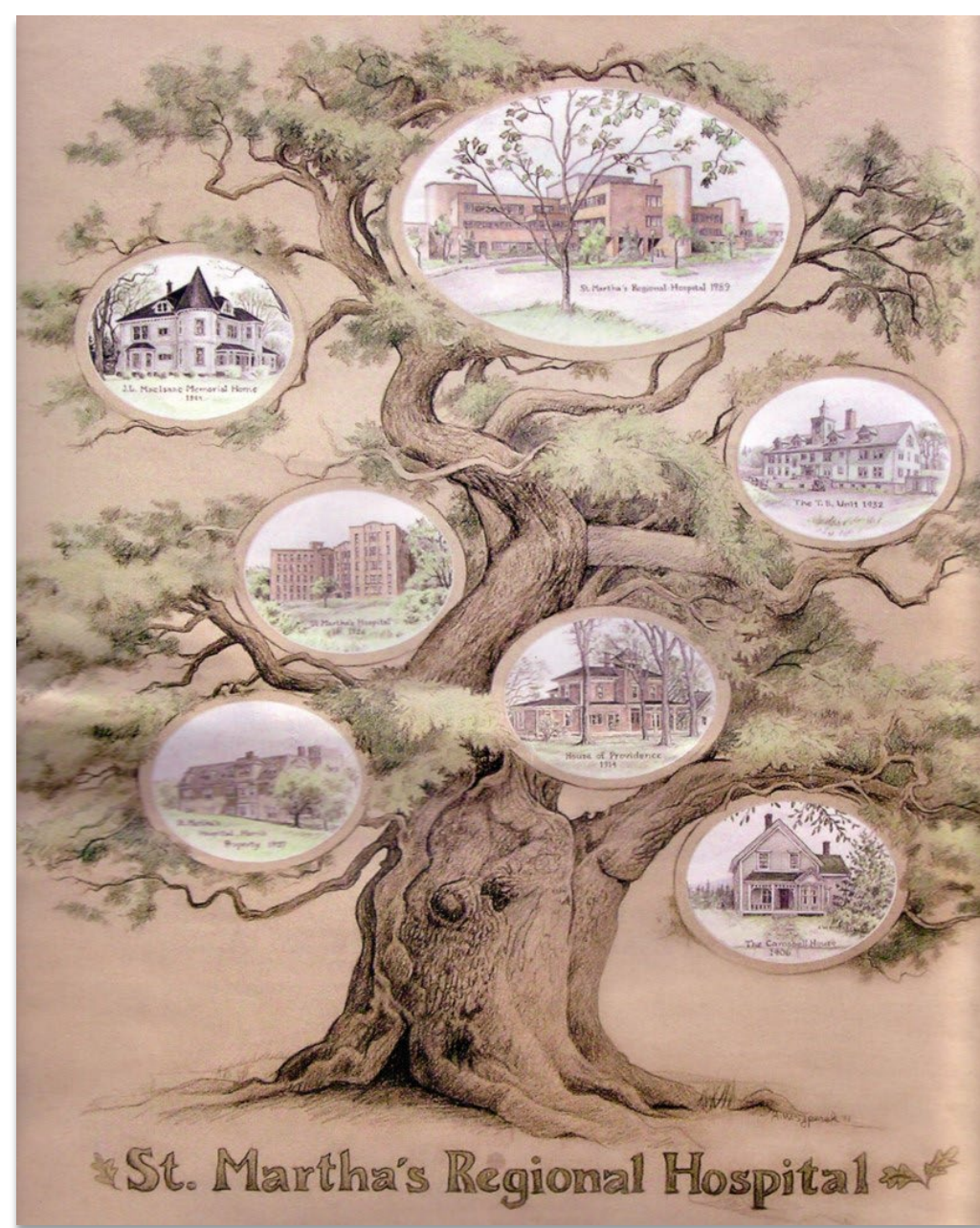
House of Providence  
1914



In 1997, the Marthas commissioned artist **Anna Syperek** to create a visual work that honoured members of the St. Martha's Hospital Boards of Directors for their service in governance (1906-1996). Syperek depicted the deep-rooted continuity of hospital care provided by the Marthas in Antigonish.



*Formal presentation, Bethany Chapel, 14 June 1997: L-r: Artist Anna Syperek, Sisters Margaret (Mary Lucia) Gillis, Catherine Estella (Shaun Marie) Chafe, and Yvonne (Mary Cyril) Vigneault, General Superior. (Photo by A. MacLellan)*



The original now hangs on the main floor, St. Martha's Regional Hospital. Copyright retained by Anna Syperek. Used with permission.



*Expert medical attention ...and patient, careful, and intelligent nursing”:*  
*St. Martha’s Hospital, Antigonish, N.S.*

In November 1905, 102 citizens of Antigonish petitioned for a “**Cottage Hospital**” to be established in town, managed by the Marthas. The hospital, they hoped, would provide “*expert medical attention*” and “*patient, careful, and intelligent nursing.*” Five local doctors offered to treat “*poor patients*” gratis.

The estimated cost of equipping the new hospital was \$500. The Sisters had no property and no income, other than their salaries of \$2.00 monthly from the College. They collected the monies by door-to-door canvassing, in what the Sisters called “*begging excursions.*”

Eight months later, the Sisters opened the **Cottage Hospital** on St. Ninian Street, Antigonish, in a house rented from Catherine Campbell, a widow.

**Campbell House** accommodated six in-patients. During its first year, staff treated more than 100 patients, performed several operations, and halted a typhoid epidemic.





Antigonish, believing that the establishment of a properly conducted Cottage Hospital in the Town of Antigonish would be the means of alleviating a great deal of suffering by providing accommodation for ~~suffering patients~~ at which they have the benefit of expert medical attendance and patient careful and intelligent nursing ~~economically~~ <sup>economically</sup> and <sup>and</sup> desire that such an institution be established under the management of the Sisters of St. Martha.

Antigonish Nov. 2. 1905-

R. D. Kirk	A. P. Chisholm
A. Macgillivray	A. J. Macdonald
Thos. Brothers	D. D. Chisholm
C. P. Chisholm	J. R. Kelly
F. P. Trotter	W. Macdonald
J. J. Sears	J. Macdonald
J. G. Fraser	Hugh. A. McDougall
Thomas Somers	Alfred Macdonald
James Somers	Chas. N. McKinn
D. Macdonald	Archibald W. McKinn
J. C. McNaughton	W. P. Macdonald
Angus Boyd	J. P. Gorman
J. A. Boyd	D. Whidden
R. H. MacPhee	A. B. Campbell
J. Bernasconi	W. C. Macintosh
J. O. Chisholm	A. J. MacKinnon
R. L. McLean	J. W. Campbell
Duncan Chisholm	Hugh Chisholm
	E. C. McIntosh

M. A. MacAdam	D. C. Chisholm
R. D. Kelly	M. Mohrman
James Kelly	Alex. McDonald
James Macdonald	William Hardy
Alfred Macdonald	Angus Macdonald
D. C. Macdonald	John C. Macdonald
J. P. Kelly	John Macdonald
J. P. Kelly	John Macdonald
Moses Somers	John Macdonald
John Campbell	Angus Macdonald
Alex. W. Kelly	A. J. Macdonald
R. J. Macdonald	D. C. Macdonald
W. Smith	Chas. Macdonald
Jack H. Stewart	W. B. Macdonald
C. D. Macdonald	A. J. Macdonald
A. D. Macdonald	Macdonald
Duncan J. Chisholm	M. L. Cunningham
Chisholm	John Carroll
D. R. Chisholm	Angus Macdonald
W. R. Macdonald	John Macdonald
John Macdonald	John Macdonald
W. D. Macdonald	W. C. Macdonald
Macdonald	W. C. Macdonald
Angus Macdonald	J. D. Macdonald
Paul Chisholm	A. Chisholm
C. J. Macdonald	D. Macdonald
John Macdonald	James Macdonald
William Chisholm	James Macdonald
D. P. Macdonald	
Angus Macdonald	
John C. Macdonald	
R. Grant	
H. P. Macdonald	
W. Macdonald	

Dr. A.M. Thompson, College Rector, addressed the issue at a meeting held on campus. He approved the proposal but refused financial aid. The Sisters would be **“given a free hand”** to manage the project and to collect donations for hospital expenses, estimated at \$500.

Excerpt from meeting minutes:

It was decided that donation should be asked for and that the Sisters of St. Martha be given charge of the collecting. Mr. Somers <sup>appointed</sup> was asked to lay the matter before the Sisters and assist them in the work. On Motion the meeting adjourned.

Petition from electors presented to Antigonish Town for a Cottage Hospital with **“expert medical attendance and patient careful and intelligent nursing....under the management of The Sisters of St. Martha.”**



## *Staffing Campbell House: the First Martha Nurses*

Antigonish citizens approached the Marthas for assistance because the Sisters had nursing skills and hospital experience. In preparation for their work at the College, they had received some practical training in caring for sick students in the infirmary and in preventing the spread of contagious diseases.

In 1902, Founders **Sr. Mary Remegius (Laura) MacArthur** and **Sr. Mary Anne (Katie) MacAdam** enrolled in the first nursing program in the Diocese of Antigonish, offered by **St. Joseph's Hospital**, Glace Bay. They graduated in 1905 – two of the five successful candidates-and became the first nurses at Campbell House.

Already adept in household services, the Marthas also managed the hospital laundry, kitchen, and cleaning duties.

*Left: First graduation ceremony, St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing, Glace Bay, 12 Aug. 1905. Identified: Governor-General Earl Grey and wife Countess Alice (Holford) Grey, three graduate nurses (note their nurses' caps), Superintendent Janet Cameron (center), **Sisters Mary Remegius (Laura) MacArthur** and **Mary Ann (Katie) MacAdam**. An interesting aside on the photograph: Sister Maris Stella (Catherine) MacDonald substituted in the photograph for Sr. M. Remegius. The priest is Rev. Ronald MacDonald, president, board of trustees, St. Joseph's Hospital.*



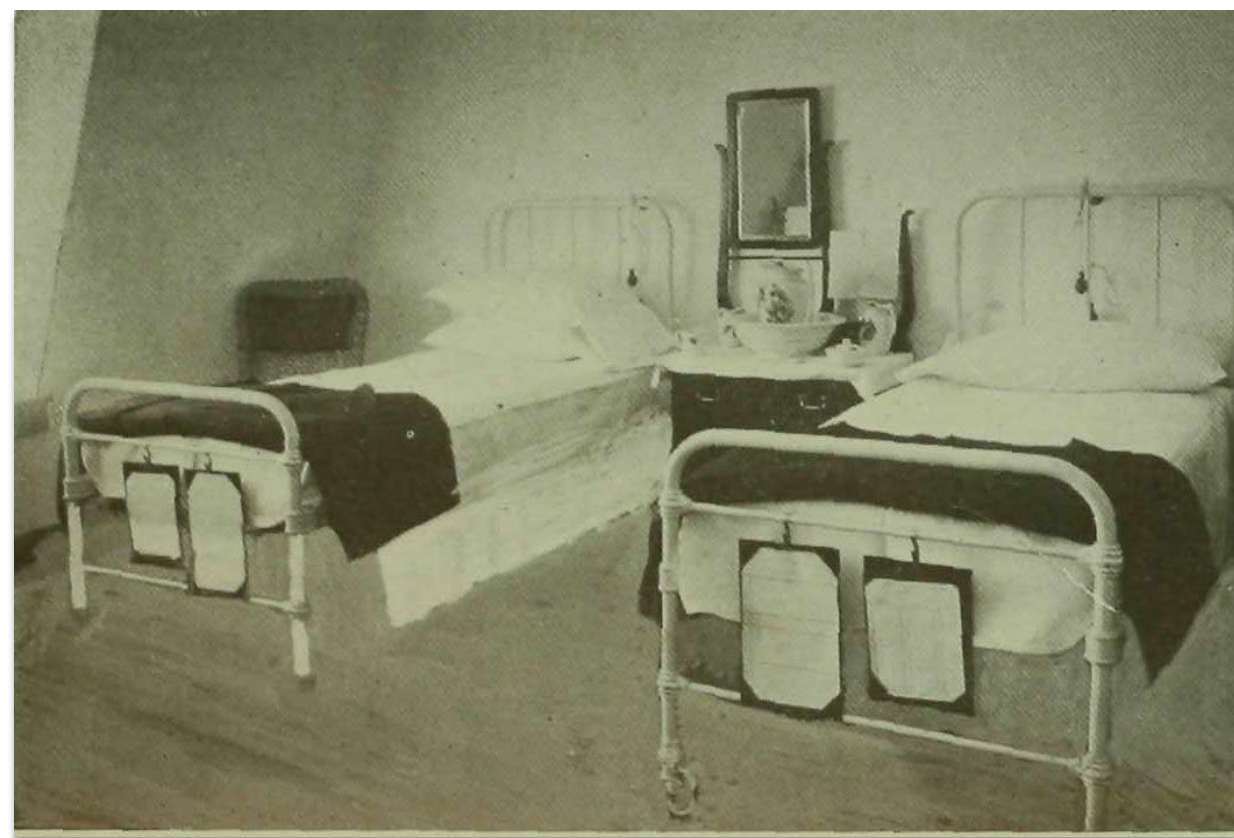
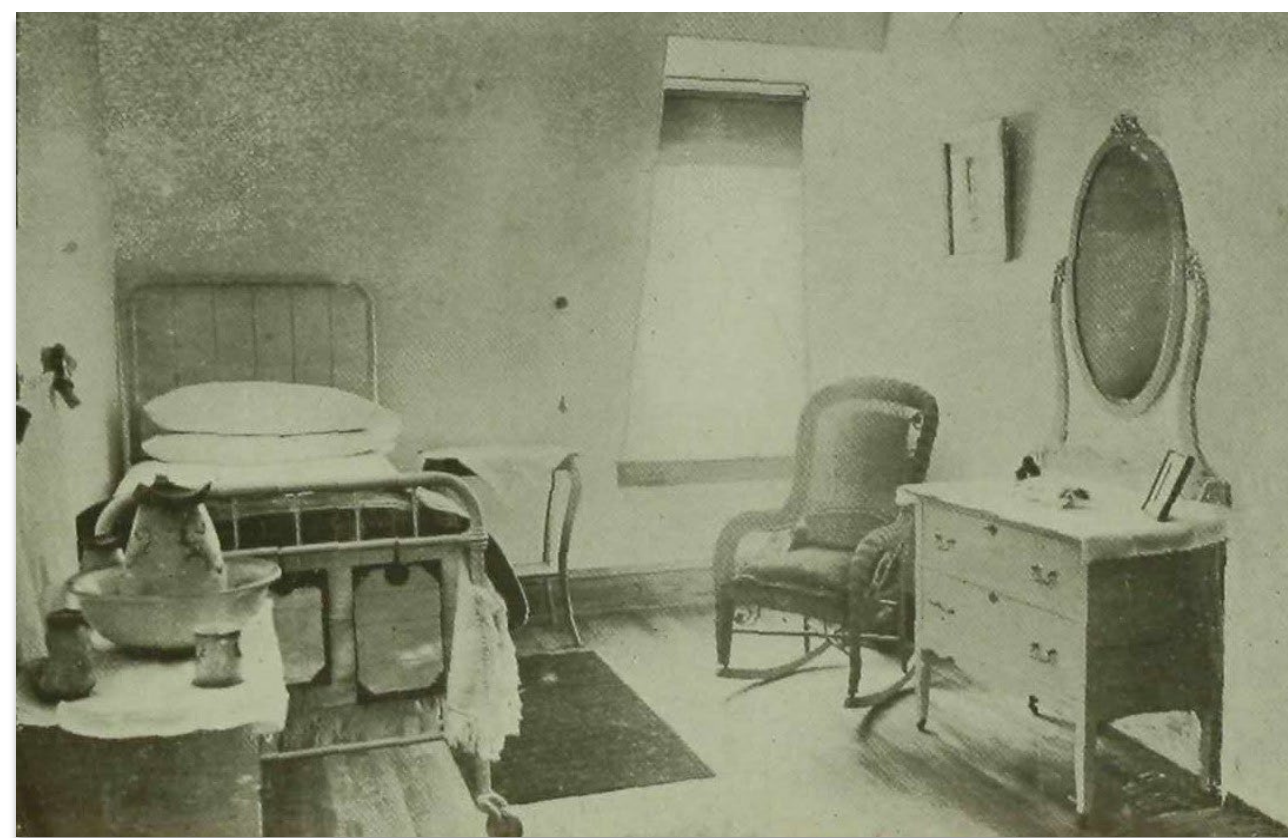




*St. Martha's Hospital, Antigonish, N.S.*  
[postcard: ca. 1912]

In 1907 the Sisters purchased “*one of the finest residences*” in Antigonish, owned by C.E. Harris. **Harris House** was transformed into **St. Martha's Hospital**, a 20-bed facility. In 1912, an **extension** was added that doubled bed capacity. The wards were connected by glass doors to wide verandas, providing patients with fresh air and sunshine.





**St. Martha's Hospital** included a men's ward (1<sup>st</sup> floor), a women's ward (2<sup>nd</sup> floor), and a children's unit (3<sup>rd</sup> floor). The Hospital had 11 private rooms; the wards accommodated 40 patients. These rare photographs, published in 1916, depict a private room (left) and a view of a ward (right). In 1915, St. Martha's staff treated 576 in-patients and performed 218 operations; there were 25 hospital workers, including graduate and student nurses, assistants, and housekeeping staff.

Images and statistics from **Tir a Phailteis /The Land of Plenty: Antigonish Town and County** (1916).





***Garden Party, St. Martha's Hospital, Antigonish.*** Garden parties were popular fundraisers for the local hospital and the Antigonish Red Cross. The exact date of this event is not known. However, a Garden Party was held in the "*Hospital Orchard*" during the official ***Laying of the Cornerstone ceremony***, 29 August 1925. Local branches of the Junior Red Cross raised monies for the construction of the Hospital.



In 1911, the Sisters opened **St. Martha's Hospital School Of Nursing**, offering a three-year program of work and study. In exchange for room and board, student nurses provided free labour. More than 2000 women graduated as nurses from the program.

In collaboration with the Marthas, St. F.X. created a five-year **BSc. in Nursing** (1926), an intensive program intended for hospital administrators and public health specialists.

*Sr. M.  
Remegius  
MacArthur,  
First  
Director,  
St. Martha's  
Hospital  
School of  
Nursing*



***St. Martha's Hospital School Of Nursing Graduation Class, 1923. Molly MacIsaac (3<sup>rd</sup> from left), later Sr. Mary of the Trinity, Giant's Lake (Guysborough Co.) served 46 years as nurse and/or administrator in several Martha hospitals.***



*Rare photographs of the staff, St. Martha's Hospital, Antigonish*



*The Nursing Staff, St. Martha's Hospital, Antigonish, 1925*



*The Sisters, St. Martha's Hospital , Antigonish, 1925*

St. Martha's Hospital Fund Campaign, ***The Story of St. Martha's Hospital, 1906-1925*** (1925), p. 14, 17. Photographs attributed to Waldren Studio (New Glasgow and Antigonish)



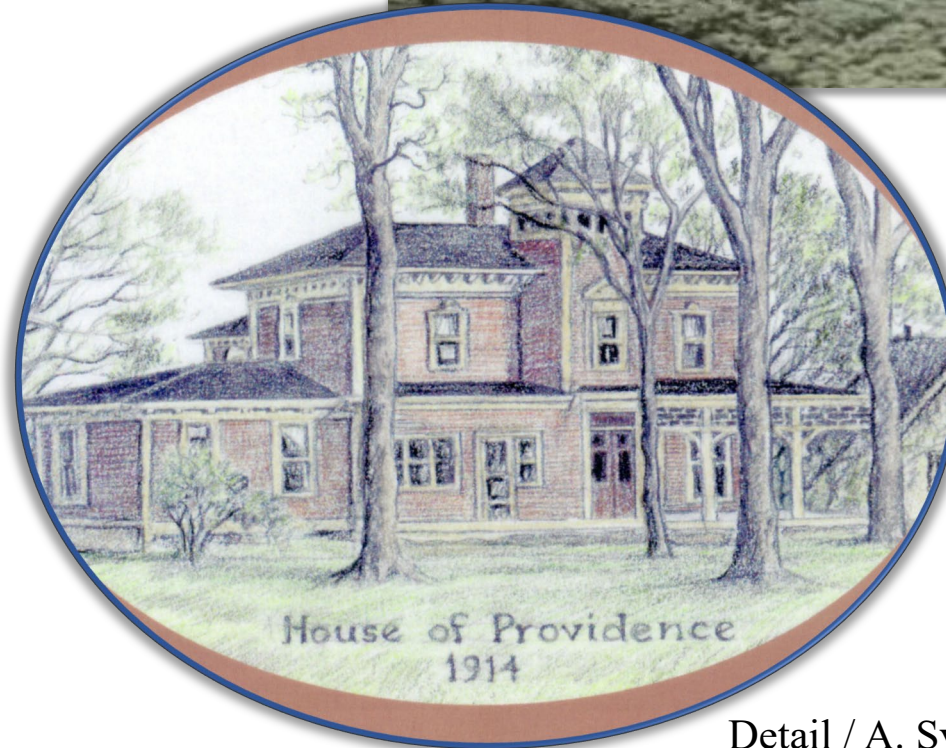
## *House of Providence, Hawthorne Street*

In 1914 the Marthas purchased a residence on Hawthorne Street for elderly, impoverished women. The **House of Providence** was administered by Founder, ***Sr. M. Francis (Elizabeth) MacAdam***. This was the first initiative by the Marthas to care for elders.

Harris House was over-crowded, however, and the mission of Providence House quickly changed. The facility was converted to provide beds for hospital patients, including convalescent veterans (1916-17) and maternity cases (1917-24).



*The House of  
Providence, Hawthorne  
Street, Antigonish, 1916,  
in **Land of Plenty**.*



Detail / A. Syperek



# From Cottage Hospital to Regional Healthcare Facility

By 1925, St. Martha's Hospital was the 3rd largest hospital in Nova Scotia, performing more operations than any other rural facility.

However, the building was totally inadequate. Nursing Sisters frequently slept in improvised beds, including straw mattresses placed on (or under) tables.



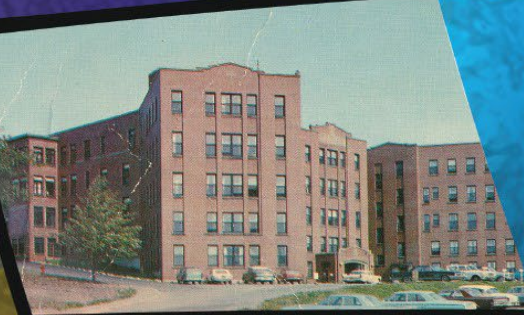
Sod turning ceremony for St. Martha's Hospital, 23 April 1925

The local hospital committee raised \$300,000 for a "new standard, modern, fully equipped 100-bed hospital."



Martha House Nurses' Residence, 1925-1963

St. Martha's Hospital, constructed 1925-1926



In 1951, three Wings were added.

The new construction provided 100+ additional beds, an obstetrical department, an enlarged and renovated pediatrics unit, and dental services.

In 1989, St. Martha's Hospital was demolished, and a new 175-bed facility was opened: St. Martha's Regional Hospital. On 30 September 1996, the Sisters transferred ownership to the N. S. Government.

Under the terms of the Mission Assurance Agreement, the Hospital remains a Christian institution in the Catholic tradition within the Martha spirit.



St. Martha's Regional Hospital 1989



Operating Team, St. Martha's Hospital, 1925

*"[Tuberculosis] is looked upon as a disgrace and... is concealed from the public, even at the risk of other lives."*  
Father Jimmy Tompkins

St. Martha's Hospital Sanitorium, a 50-bed unit built by the N.S. Government, operated between 1933 and 1957.

The presence of a local TB treatment centre reduced much of the stigma attached to this disease and encouraged many families to seek medical assistance.



A young TB patient



Staff and volunteers, Martha Home Health Care for seniors

In 1978, the Marthas piloted a program to provide home nursing to seniors. The Martha Home Health Care became the model for similar initiatives in N.S.



## *“Help us give you Better Service”*

By 1925, St. Martha’s Hospital was the third largest hospital in Nova Scotia, performing more operations than any other rural facility.

However, the building was totally inadequate and patient displaced resident staff. The Hospital Sisters frequently slept in improvised beds, fashioned from straw mattresses placed on tables (and under tables). Sometimes the nurses had no sleeping accommodations; the night nurses slept in the same beds vacated by the day nurses.

The local hospital committee raised \$300,000 for a “*new standard, modern, fully equipped 100-bed hospital*”. The former hospital became the Sisters’ and Nurses’ Residence.



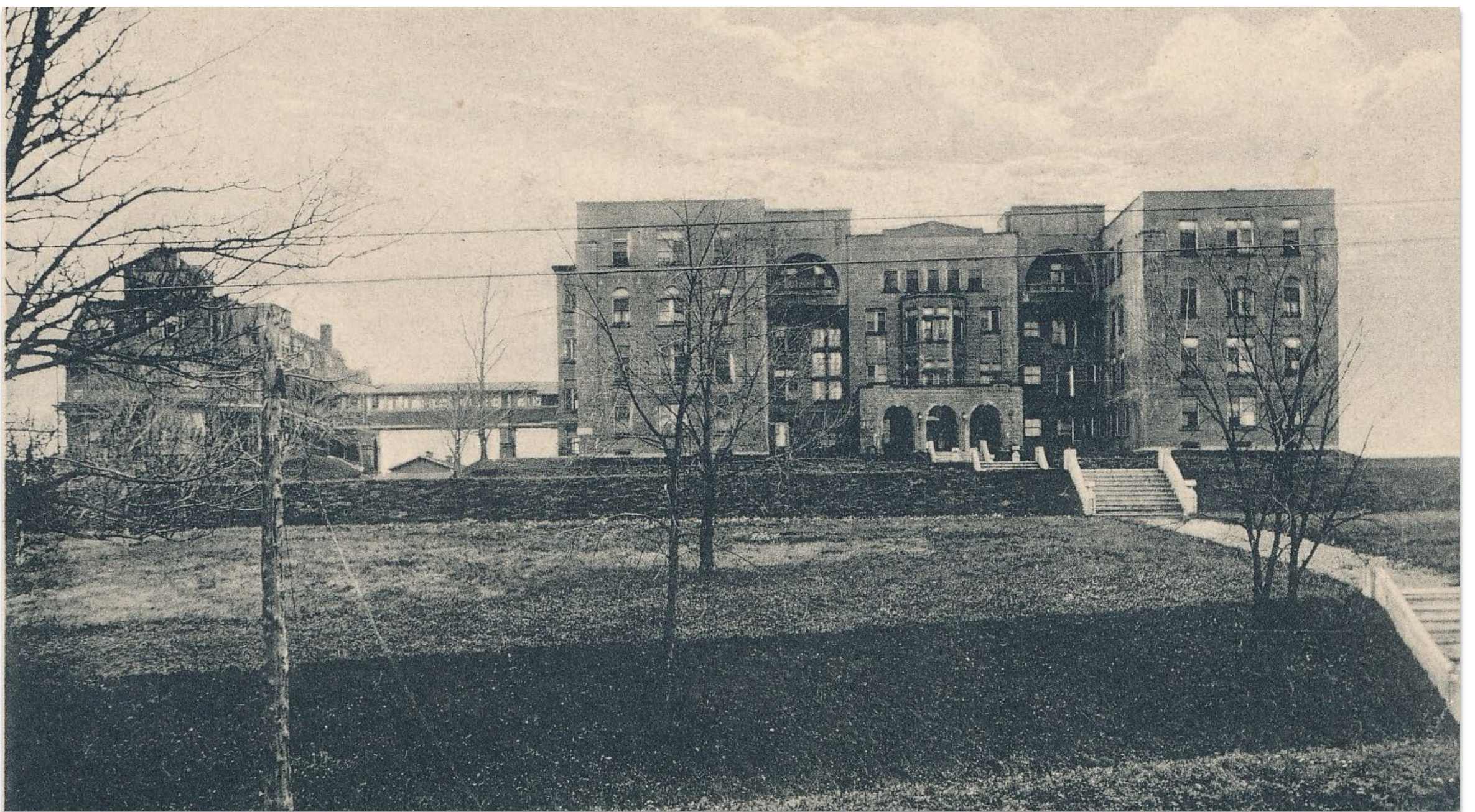
***The Operating Room, St. Martha’s Hospital, Antigonish, 1925: Dr. J. L. MacIsaac, Sister Mary Dolorosa (Annie) Murphy, Sister Philip Neri (Margaret) MacDonald, Dr. W.F MacKinnon, with unidentified nurses / Waldren Studio. The photograph was published by the Hospital Campaign Fund (1925), with the caption, “Help us give you better service.”***





***Sod turning ceremony for new St. Martha's Hospital, Antigonish, 23 April 1925.*** The first sod was turned by Bishop James Morrison – note the shovel on the temporary stage. Excavation of the site “*began immediately.*”





*St. Martha's Hospital*, constructed 1925-1926, was connected by a walkway to Nurses' Residence, formerly Harris House, 1937 [postcard]. The new hospital, a 4-story brick building (125 beds) costing more than \$400,000, opened officially on 11 May 1926.



# *St. Martha's Hospital Sanatorium, 1933-1957*

*"[Tuberculosis] is looked upon as a disgrace and... is concealed from the public, even at the risk of other lives"*

*Father Jimmy Tompkins*



In the 1930s, the Nova Scotia Government initiated a program to reduce tuberculosis (T.B.) by erecting specialized units (“*annexes*”) adjacent to several hospitals. The largest annex was the [St. Martha's Hospital Sanatorium](#), a 50-bed unit that opened in 1933. The government also established T.B. annexes beside Martha-staffed hospitals at [St. Joseph's Hospital](#), Glace Bay, and at [St. Mary's Hospital](#), Inverness.

The presence of a local TB treatment centre reduced much of the stigma attached to this disease and encouraged many families to seek treatment.

After the Sanatorium closed, the building was used as the [Nurses' Residence](#) (1957-1965), and later renovated as the [Hospital Laboratory](#) (1965-1989).

*St. Martha's Hospital Sanatorium [1933]*





***Sister Mary de Lourdes (Dorothy Francis) Gould**  
reading to a young girl, a patient in the St. Martha's  
Hospital Sanitorium, Antigonish.*

Sr. Gould herself had suffered from tuberculosis. She was a T.B. patient in St. Martha's Hospital from 1929 to 1934. In 1937, she joined the nursing staff of the Sanitorium where she served fourteen years, until 1951.





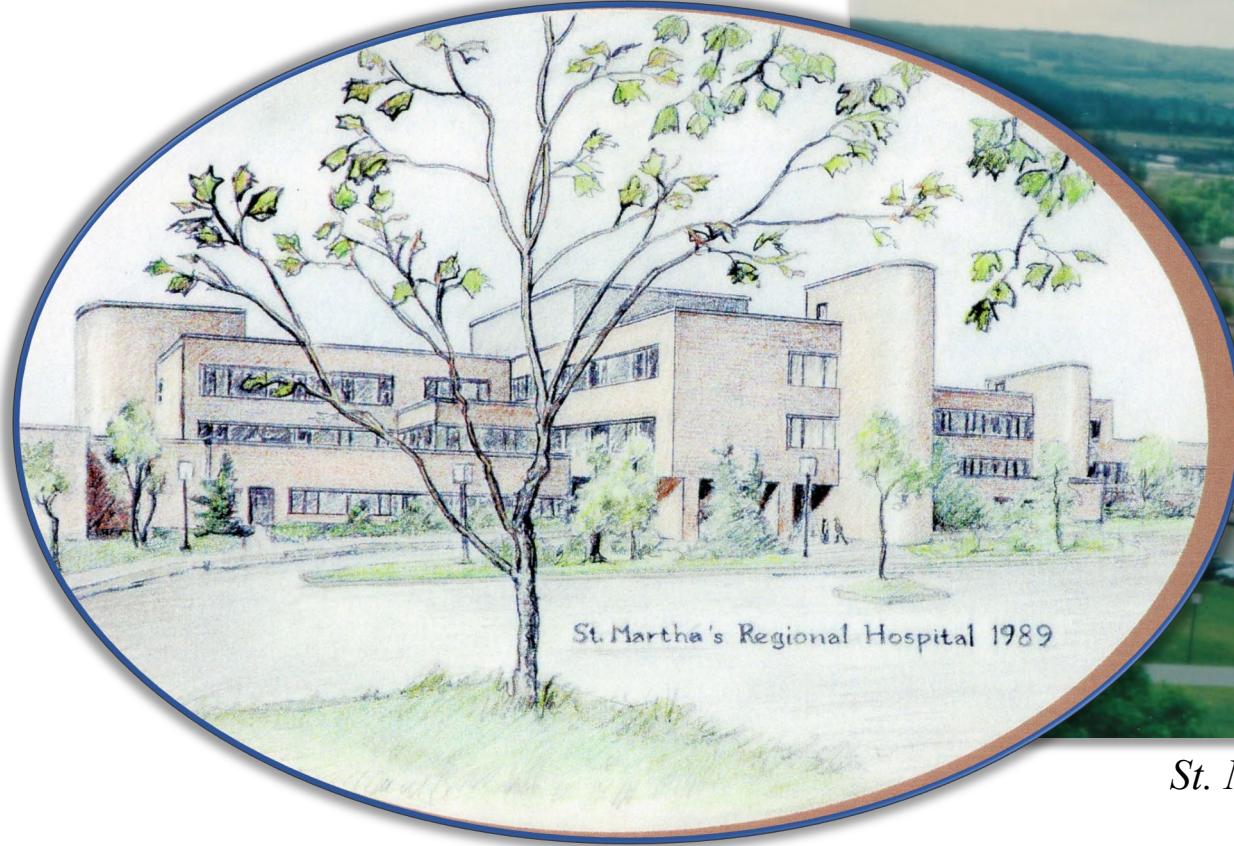
*St. Martha's Hospital, Antigonish, following additions, 1951* [postcard]

Following the war, the federal government offered grants for hospital construction. The Marthas augmented the anticipated grant by a massive fundraising campaign.

On 15 October 1951, St. Martha's Hospital opened a four-storey, three wing addition that increased inpatient capacity to 203 beds. The improvements included a new obstetrical department, an enlarged and renovated pediatrics unit, and enhanced dental services.



# *St. Martha's Regional Hospital*



Detail / A. Syperek



*St. Martha's Regional Hospital, Antigonish, N.S. [1989]*

In 1989, the old St. Martha's Hospital building was demolished and a new 175-bed facility was opened: [St. Martha's Regional Hospital](#). On 30 September 1996, the Sisters transferred ownership to the Nova Scotia government. Under the terms of the Mission Assurance Agreement, the Hospital remains a Christian institution in the Catholic tradition within the Martha spirit.



## *Martha Home Health Care for Seniors, Antigonish*

In 1978, the Marthas piloted a program to provide home nursing to seniors. One of the project's directors was Sister **Baptista Maria (Catherine) MacDonald**, who had pioneered home services for elders in Boston.

The Martha Home Health Care became the model for similar initiatives in N.S.

*Martha Home Health Care for Seniors (MHHC),  
staff and volunteers for 1985 reunited for a meal,  
Antigonish, 1994.*

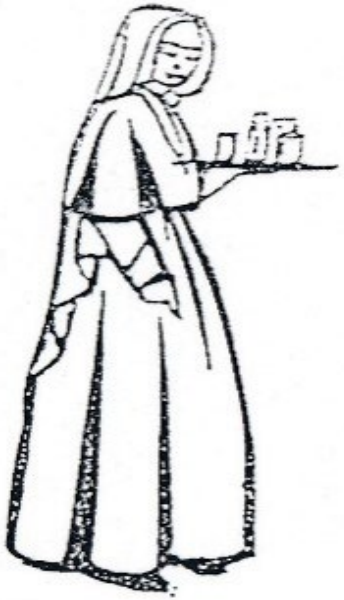
**1st row:** Sr. Hugh Teresina (Ann) McNeil\*, Mrs. Linda MacLellan. **2<sup>nd</sup> row:** Mrs. Ann MacPherson\*, Sr. Anita (Mary Shamus) Driscoll\*, Mrs. Claire MacDonald\*. **3<sup>rd</sup> row:** Sr. Katherine (Mary Rosalia) MacNeil, Sr. Veronica (Agnes Michael) Matthews. **Top row:** Mrs. Marnie MacVicar (nurse), Mrs. Shirley Newman, first secretary.

*\*Original members*





## Notes



Print / Sr. Irene  
(Mary Anselm) Doyle

For rare photographs of St. Martha's Hospital, see the Antigonish Board of Trade publication(1916): [Antigonish Land of Plenty.pdf](#)

The **Catholic Hospital Alliance of Canada Health Network** has digitized several pamphlets related to [St. Martha's Hospital](#), Antigonish, as part of the **Catholic Hospitals Digital History Books Collection**. The original St. Martha Hospital items are part of the holdings of the [CSM Archives](#). See: [Catholic Hospital Digital History Book Collection | Catholic Health Alliance of Canada](#)

**The Story of St. Martha's Hospital, 1906-1925, Antigonish** (19 p.)

See: [Antigonish: The Story of St. Martha's Hospital 1906-1925.pdf](#)

**St. Martha's Hospital, 1951** (22p.) See: [Antigonish: St. Martha's Hospital 1951.pdf](#)

**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St. Martha's School of Nursing, 1911-1989** (16 p.)

See: [Antigonish: St. Martha's Hospital School of Nursing 75th.pdf](#)

For a brief history of the treatment of tuberculosis in Nova Scotia, see Sheila M. Penney, [Tuberculosis in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Nova Scotia](#) (M.A.: 1990). Recently, historians have described the limitations of treatment options for the marginalized, including Aboriginal Peoples, people of colour, and the impoverished. See, for example, [A Brief History of Indian Hospitals in Canada](#) (2017).