



The *Great* Canadian Catholic Hospital History Project

Documenting the legacy and contribution of the
Congregations of Religious Women in Canada,
their mission in health care, and the founding and operation of Catholic hospitals.



Projet de la *Grande* Histoire des hôpitaux catholiques au Canada

Retracer l'héritage et la contribution des
congrégations de religieuses au Canada,
leur mission en matière de soins de santé ainsi que la fondation et l'exploitation des hôpitaux catholiques.

Mount Saint Joseph Hospital, Vancouver

**25th Anniversary of Mount Saint Joseph Hospital;
50th Anniversary of the Arrival in Vancouver of the
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception**

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25th anniversary of
Mount Saint Joseph Hospital



50th anniversary of
the arrival in Vancouver of
The Missionary Sisters
of the Immaculate Conception

25/50

*"Large rivers from little fountains flow,
Tall oaks from little acorns grow."*

David Barrett (1769-1813)

1921-1971

Imagine if you will, with sympathy, fifty years ago, four Sisters from Montreal whose English was sparse, making the long train trip across Canada to come to Vancouver, a place that was only a name on the map to them. One had been to China and spoke Cantonese, one was an American and two were French Canadian.

These four ladies, Sr. Marie du Sacre Coeur, Sr. Aimee de Jesus, Sr. Marie du Saint Redempteur and Sr. Marie de St. Georges, were about to plant some acorns. But perhaps they did not know that then.

What they did know was a message very clear from Archbishop Timothy Casey: "We have a great need in Vancouver for the services of your order, The Missionary Sisters of The Immaculate Conception."

By May 2, 1921 the four Sisters were on their way from Montreal to open a new Mission for the Chinese children in Vancouver.

They began very simply by renting a small house on Keefer Street which they immediately turned into a school early in June. Between coping with an old sawdust furnace, a lack of money and space, the four Sisters had their problems. ✓



Sr. Aimee de Jesus wrote a long letter back home to the Sisters' Community in Montreal, extolling the virtues of all she had met, and inevitably, even the weather.

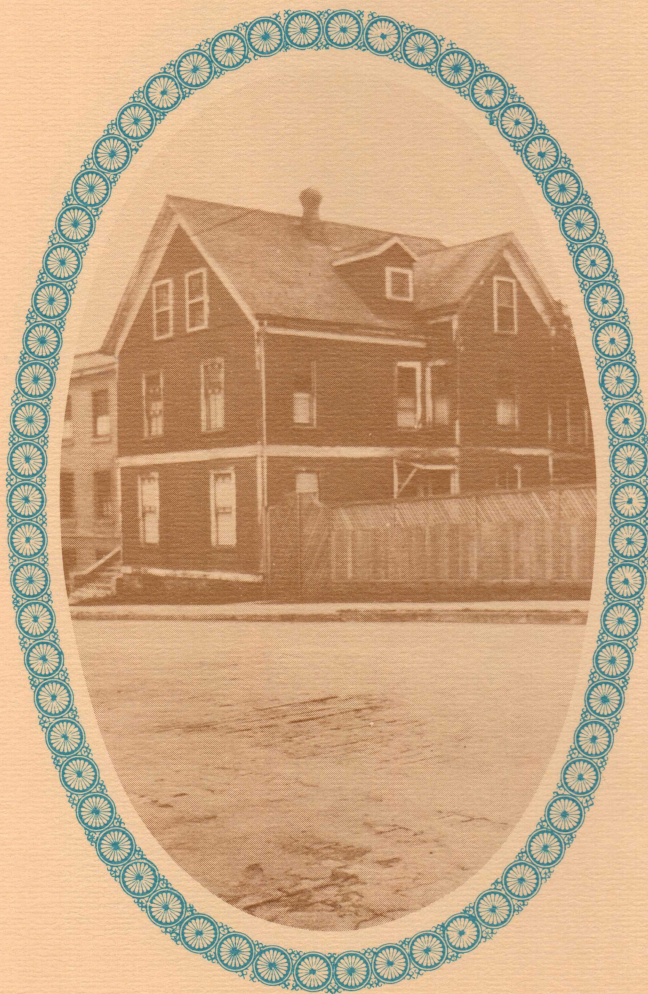
"My letter is very long, but I cannot end it without speaking about the Vancouver weather. No winter, no snow, no ice. It is never very cold and it is also never terribly hot. Sometimes we go out and the sun is shining, when we come home, it is raining. One never knows."

The Sisters, squeezed for space, bought a house on Campbell Avenue in 1924 and made it into a Dispensary. Quickly they outgrew that house and bought the old Woodward house on Campbell Avenue. This house served as a Convent for the Sisters and as a small Missionary Hospital. They began by admitting 18 patients.

Within four years they had built an adjoining hospital and it was not long before it too was full.

So once again the Sisters went looking for property. Finally with the help of Father Forget from St. Patrick's Parish, Alderman Halford Wilson and Solicitor Alfred H. J. Swencisky, in March 1941, the property at 3080 Prince Edward Street was purchased by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Three years later on November 2, the foundations of Mount Saint Joseph Hospital were laid.

Mount Saint Joseph Hospital owes much to the Chinese Association and (co-ordinator Sr. Teresa Fung) for their efforts in raising funds which contributed to our success as a community general hospital.



They say that before the Sisters came, this was a sheep ranch owned by a Mr. Dobson. They say too that it was marsh land, and there was a beautiful orchard here filled with every kind of fruit tree imaginable.

Sr. Emma Barrette has clear recollections of opening day. "We carried in and set up bed after bed. Finally at 6 o'clock my trunk was delivered with a chair and a mattress and I gladly put the mattress on the floor and went to sleep."

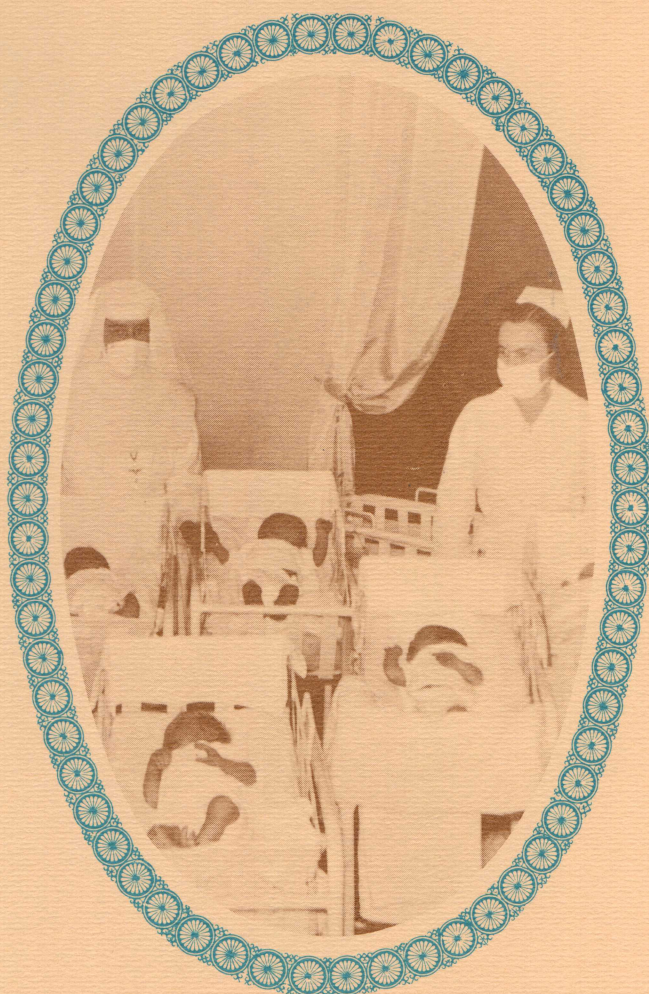
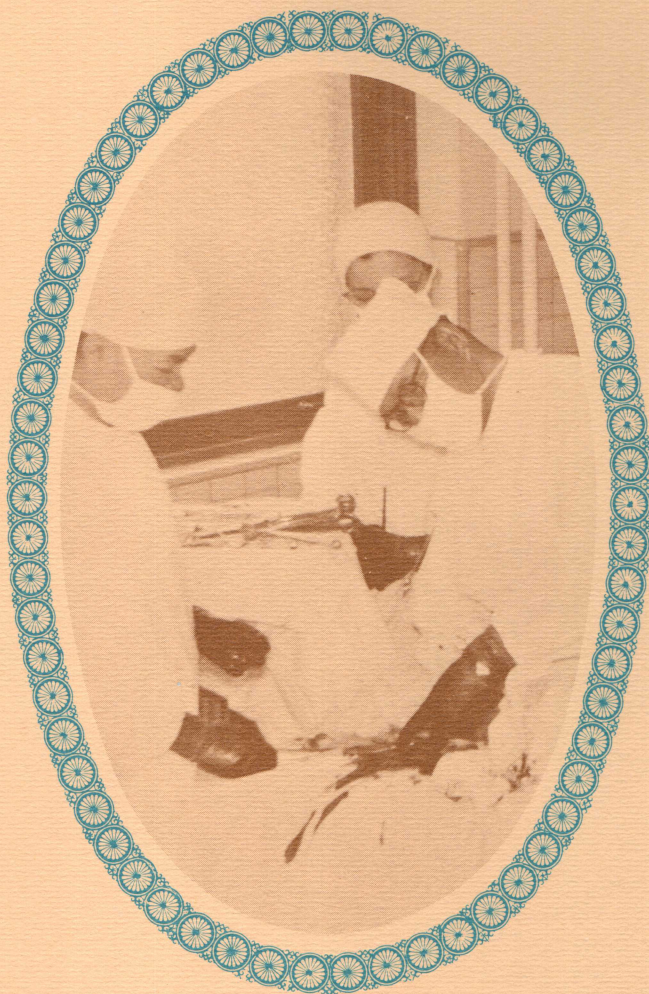
"In those days there were only five Sisters, including me. At first we admitted only 12 patients. A handful of us did everything you can think of. I myself can remember being in charge of

the switchboard, receiving equipment, looking after the employees, just about everything."

As more patients arrived, the staff increased until **Mount Saint Joseph** had a complement of 18 Sisters, a few lay people and six doctors.

Dr. Fred Chu, the only one of the original six left at **Mount Saint Joseph**, recalls at the beginning we had "few elaborate cases". "Our main chores were delivering babies and taking out tonsils. Not a very impressive start, but it was a beginning."

As Dr. Chu recalls it: "We had about 90 beds and at the start we only filled half of them. Then in 1948 when they decided to make it a General Hospital, not just for Orientals, things picked up. Maybe we had 65% occupancy."



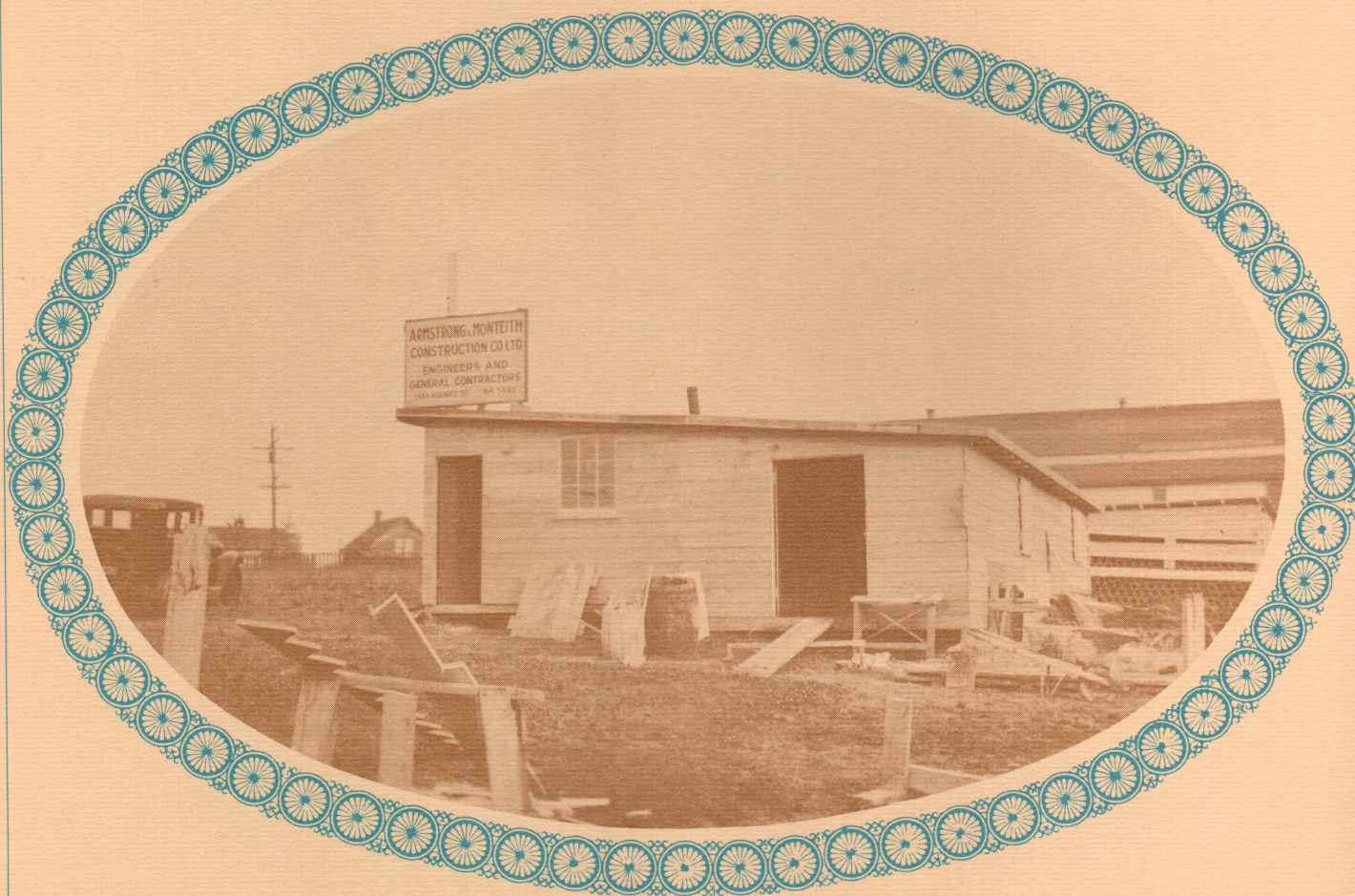
"But the big boom came in January 1949 when Hospital Insurance came into effect. We were just jammed . . . everyone came in for elective surgery, things like gall bladder, varicose veins, that sort of thing."

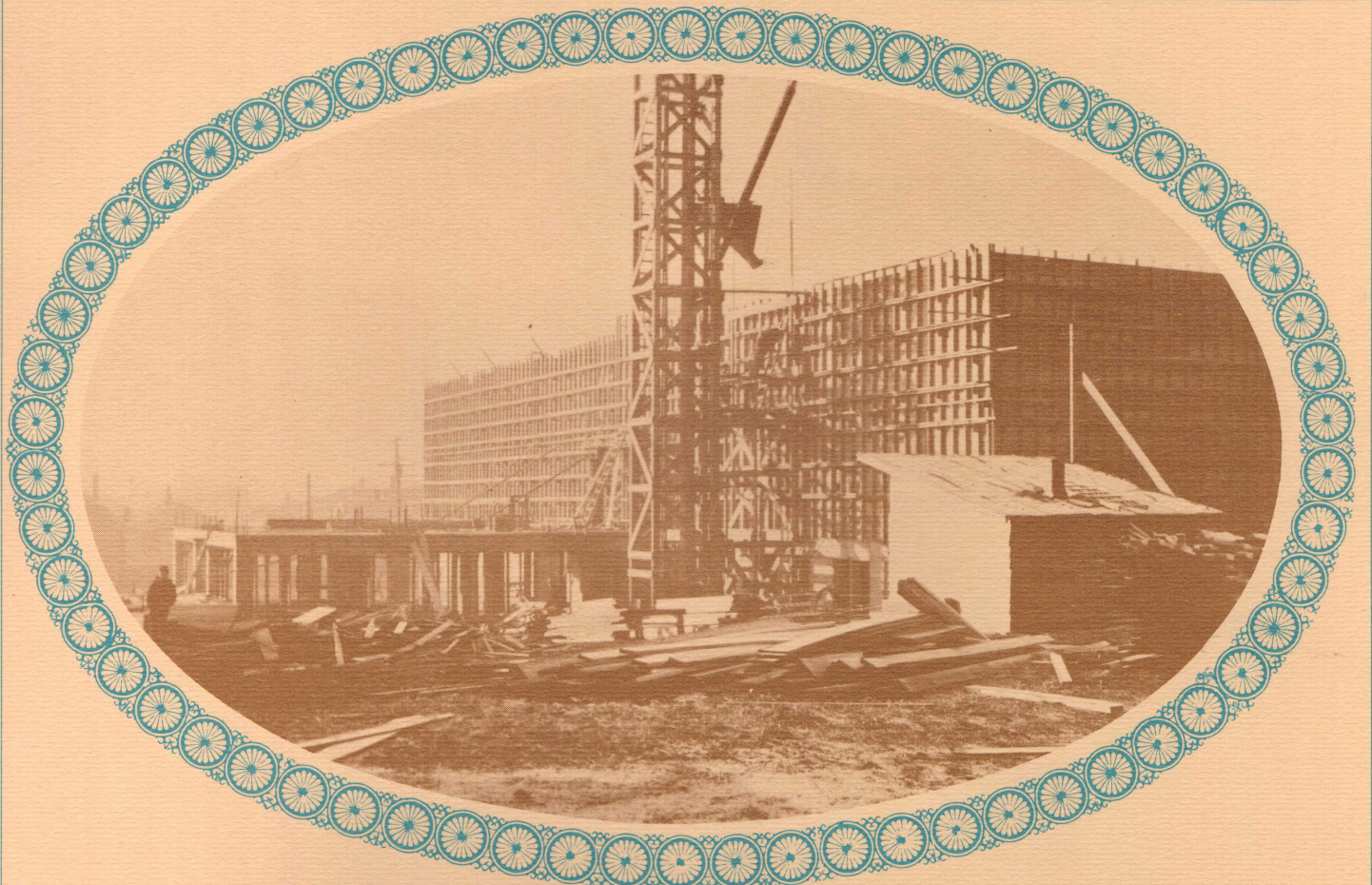
"In the beginning we had two operating rooms. In the big one we did three to five surgeries a week, but after Hospital Insurance entered the picture we did three to five a day. And the little O.R., that became my territory. I gave the anaesthetic for the tonsils and after Hospital Insurance we did as many as eight a day!"

"I delivered the first baby in December 1946, a little girl, Frances Chew. She was premature and since there were no incubators, we kept her alive with hot water bottles. She weighed only three pounds. We kept her here for six months. And now she is married and has children of her own."

"Of course as we grew, the staff enlarged. By 1950 we had Dr. S. W. Leung, Dr. F. L. Skinner, Dr. W. Y. Wong, Dr. C. A. Mathews and Dr. E. D. Herberts, all still here. Sr. Marguerite Dumont, R.N. came in 1948. She was called Sr. Marie Theophane then." In December 1964, the Sisters were allowed to use their own names, rather than religious names.

Dr. Skinner arrived at **Mount Saint Joseph Hospital** a few weeks after it opened. He immediately set up an Electrocardiography Unit. Before his arrival, people who needed an electrocardiogram were transported by ambulance to the Vancouver General and back again. Dr. Skinner changed all that, he had a portable Electrocardiograph machine that weighed 35 lbs. which he would carry around the floors to the various patients and then develop and interpret the cardiograph tracings.





"In those days," he says, "we didn't have what you would call a full house. I can remember asking the Admitting Sister if I could please have a bed for a patient. And she said: 'Certainly, but can't you find us more than just one patient?'"

And then a new influence entered **Mount Saint Joseph Hospital**, Sr. Emma Barrette, then called Sr. Anne of Jesus, gathered together 25 ladies and under the direction of the first President, Mrs. Agnes Brunt, a Ladies' Auxiliary was formed. Seven of the original members still serve **Mount Saint Joseph Hospital** on the Auxiliary. They began by raising money through bazaars. Since then they have added a list of patient services to help the hospital.

Once again we faced the problem of too many patients and too few beds and thankfully, July 21, 1956 a 50 bed wing was added to **Mount Saint Joseph** and officially opened by the Honorable

Eric Martin, M.L.A., Minister of Health and Welfare at that time.

With it came a new surge of enthusiasm. In 1958 the hospital was accredited by the Joint Council on Hospital Accreditation.

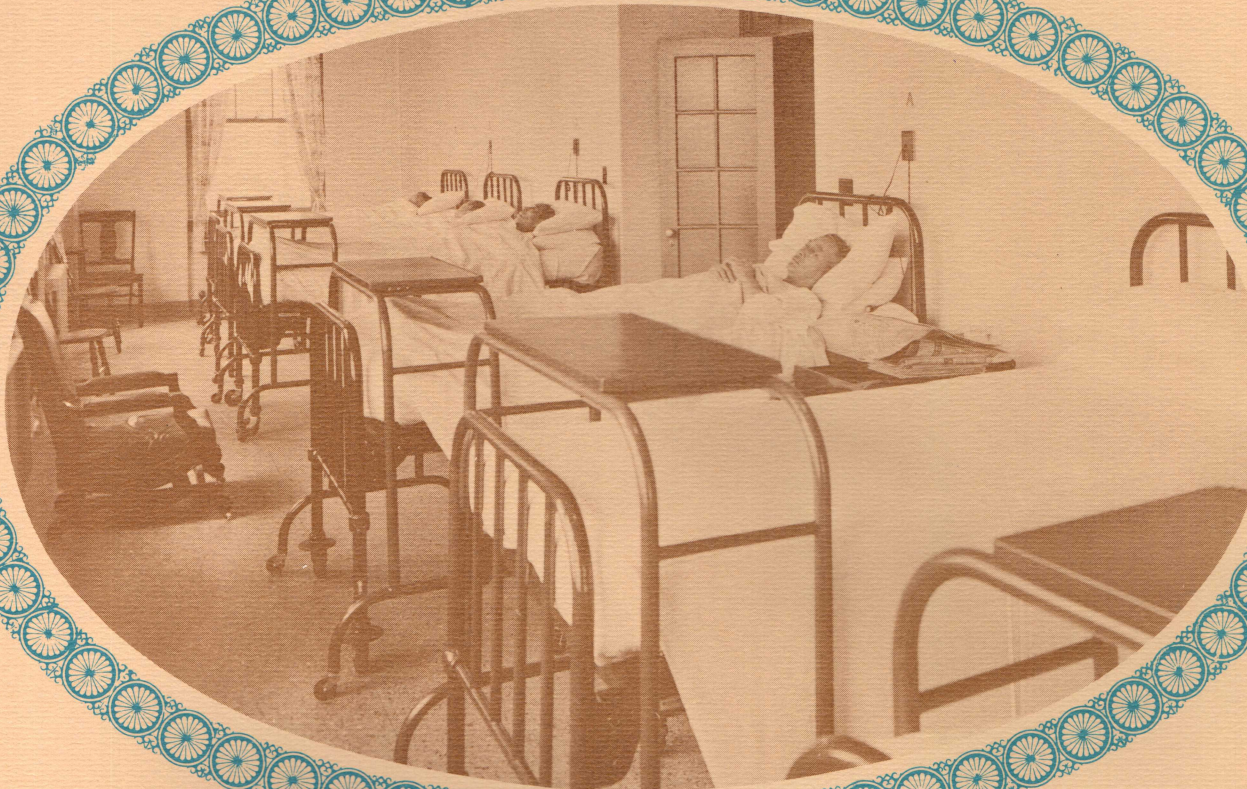
In that same year we had Vancouver's Centennial baby. According to Sr. Dumont it was very confusing. "We had the Centennial Baby, Diana Louise Wagar. She weighed 6 lbs., 15 oz. And the Vancouver General said *they* had the Centennial Baby born there."

"You see there was a Bursary to be awarded for the first boy and the first girl."

"Well these were both girls and there was such a fuss about which hospital had the first girl, they split the Bursary. But we had the first girl, here at **Mount Saint Joseph Hospital**. Besides, the one born at the General was premature."



OPENING DAY OCT. 2, 1946



1956 OPENING OF NEW WING

In a hospital administered by Sisters of the Roman Catholic faith, one would hardly imagine that the invention of *the pill* would have any effect. It is an anachronism that a hospital that first dealt mainly with maternity cases, suddenly found that the maternity ward was no longer full. In a stroke of brilliance it was decided to remove the maternity ward and up-date **Mount Saint Joseph** with the latest word in patient care . . . an Intensive Care Unit, a three bed unit designed for patients who need 24 hour close surveillance.

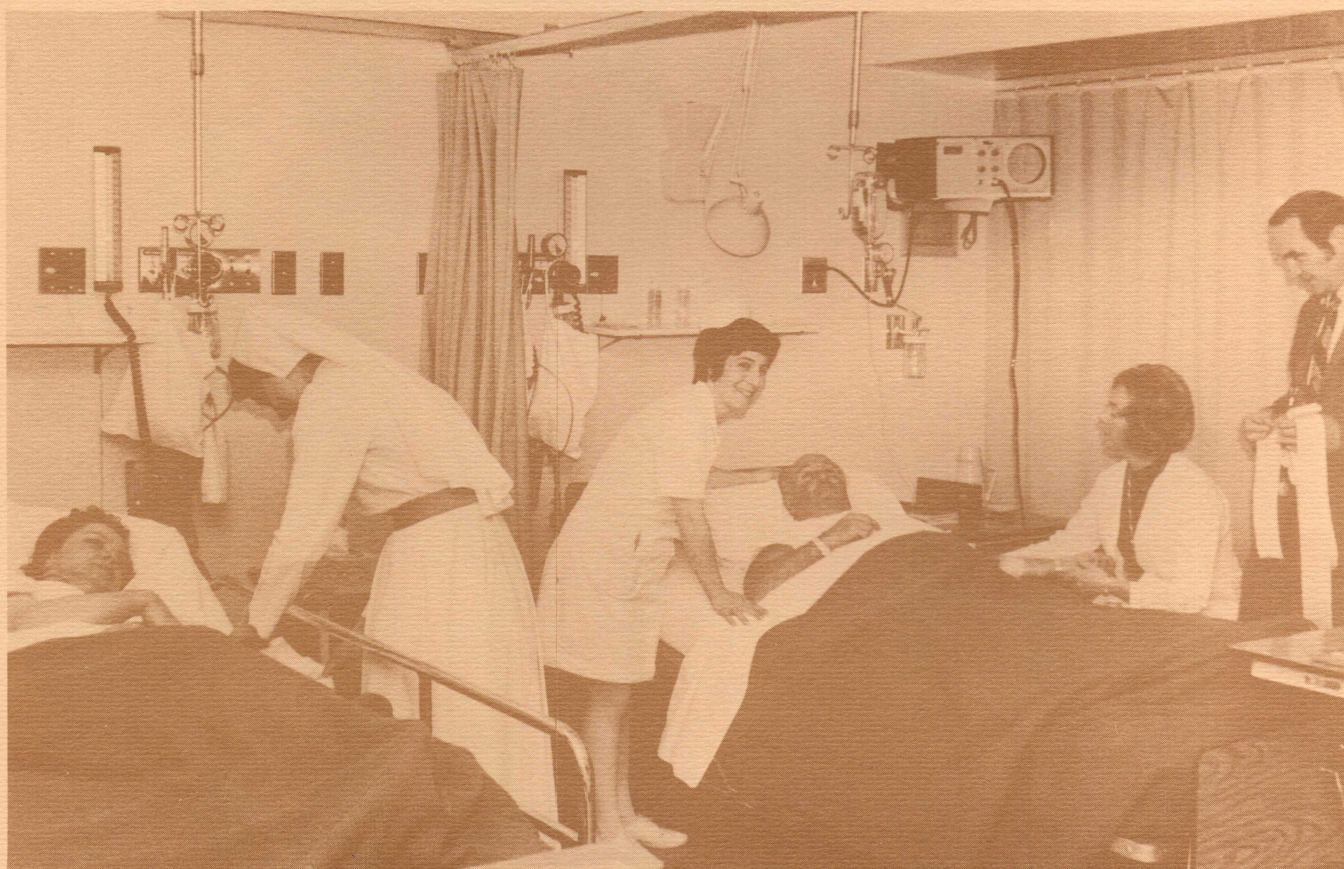
The Intensive Care Unit was officially opened October 2nd, 1969 by the Honorable Ralph Loffmark, Minister of Health and Health Insurance. The addition of this unit was made possible with the help of the Provincial Government, the Greater Vancouver Regional Hospital District and private donations.

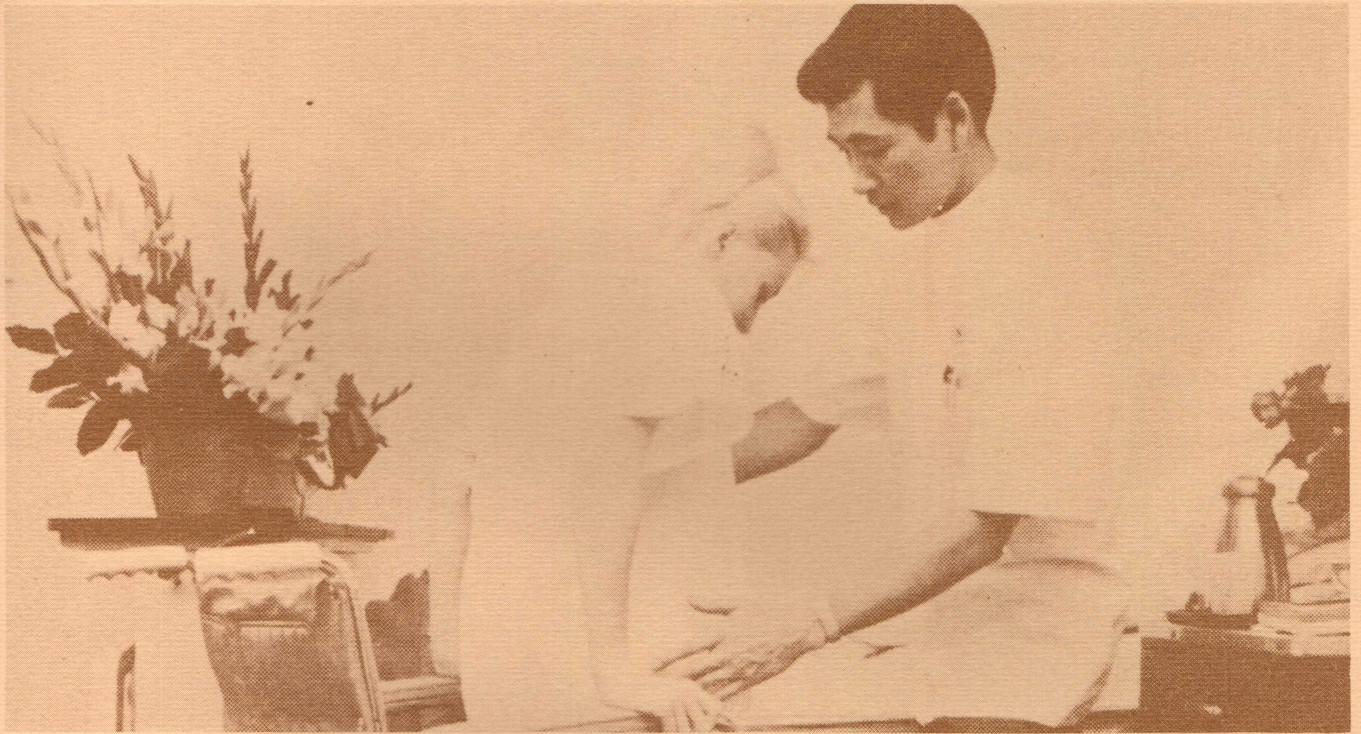
Throughout the years, **Mount Saint Joseph** has been busy up-dating patient care through improvement of facilities, equipment and staff.

Physiotherapy became a potent factor in the hospital serving both Acute and Extended Care patients. A physio room that once consisted of a box of crutches has expanded to three rooms containing the most modern equipment available.

In 1970 a four bed Day Care Surgical centre was opened. Patients are admitted for minor surgery and discharged within 24 hours.

But once again we are bulging at the seams. To alleviate the situation, the Community of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception are financing a house for the Sisters to be built on the property so that their living area in the hospital can be used to expand our Admitting and Administrative facilities.





Today, **Mount Saint Joseph Hospital** is located in a residential area at 3080 Prince Edward Street, bordering Kingsway and 15th. It is a modern, progressive general hospital serving the community of Greater Vancouver. The hospital has a total of 154 beds, so that each patient receives the added touch that only a small hospital can give.

The Medical Staff is second to none. We are fortunate in having Dr. Allin Herbert Moore, M.D., F.R.C.S. (Ed.), F.R.C.S. (Eng.), F.R.C.S. (C) as Chief of Staff.

President of the Active Medical Staff is Dr. Edward David Herberts, B.A., M.D., a Urologist.

Dr. James Jackson Ironside is in charge of the Department of Surgery. Dr. Ironside graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 1949 and holds degrees including an M.B., CH.B., L.M.C.L., F.R.C.S. (Ed) and F.R.C.S. (C).

Head of the Department of Medicine is Dr. John Graham Gillis, M.D. C.M., a highly qualified physician in Internal Medicine.

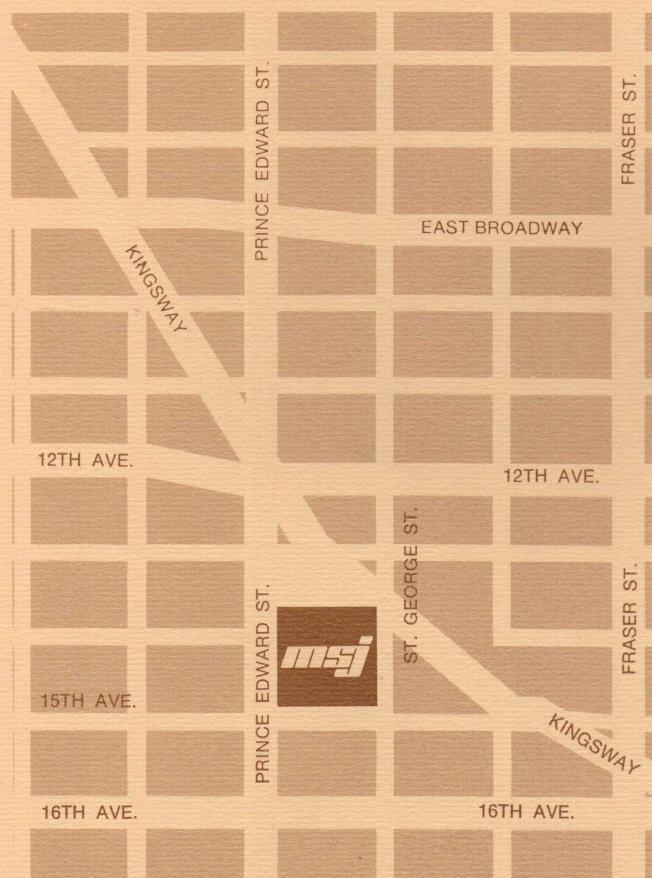
Dr. William Kolotyluk, B. Sc., M.D., is Head of the Department of General Practice.

Representing the Medical Staff on the Building Committee is Dr. T. Y. Chang, M.D., General Surgeon. Dr. Ali Bouaziz, M.D., F.R.C.S. (C), graduate of the Sorbonne and the University of Paris, is Chairman of the I.C.U. Committee.

The Nursing Staff, the backbone of the Hospital, is under the very capable supervision of Mrs. Edna Whalen, who has been with us since 1956.

Radiology, pharmacy, laboratory and all Ancillary Departments are constantly being up-dated to keep in step with the progress of the hospital.

The most recent innovation at **Mount Saint Joseph**



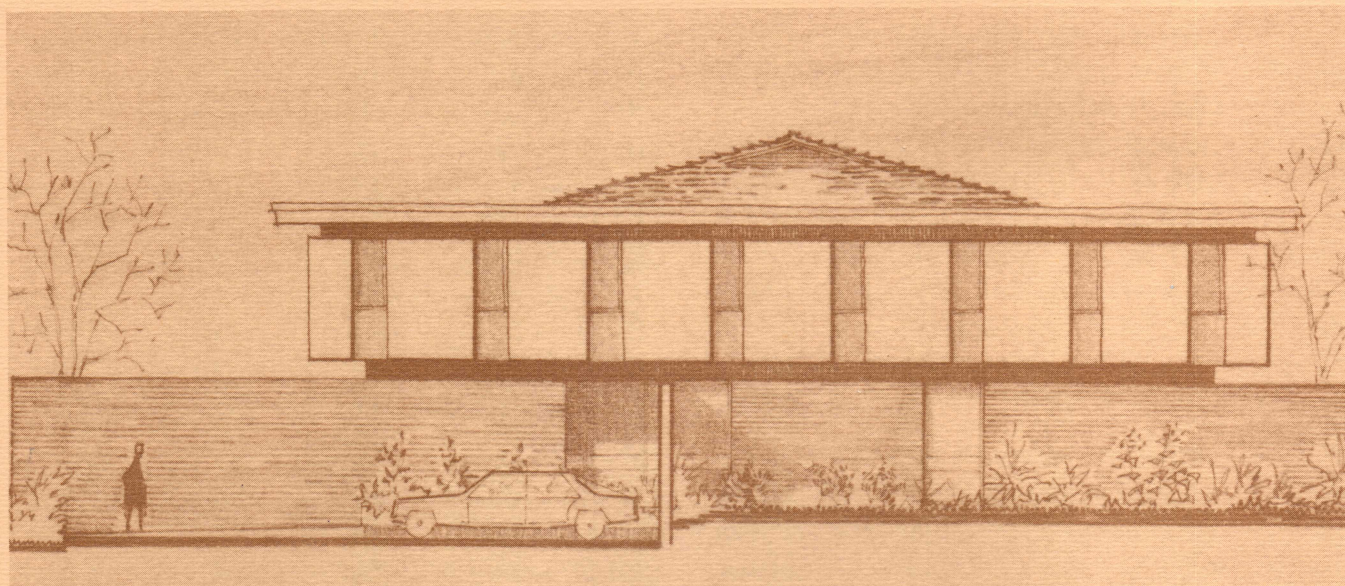
is a new concept in health for Extended Care patients. A new room has been opened as a dentist's office. It is manned entirely by volunteer dentists to look after the dentistry problems of the Extended Care patients, people who cannot physically get to a usual dentist's office. This program is the brain child of Oral Surgeon Dr. A. E. Swanson and is administered by him. It may well be a "first" in British Columbia, that is to say, the only "on-going" Dental Care given to Extended Care patients.

We have probably the most unique kitchen of any hospital in British Columbia. While most of our patients are Occidental, we still have some aged Orientals in our Extended Care Unit and because of them our kitchen supplies not only North American food, but Oriental as well. Sometimes this is their only link with the past as they have very few visitors.

The responsibilities of administering **Mount Saint Joseph Hospital** are in the hands of Sr. Germaine Roy, R.N., B.Sc. N. Ed., M.H.A. and a Board of Directors, including Chairman, Mr. Tim Louie, Investment Broker; Mr. E. C. Cooley, Civil Engineer; Mr. Ray Sheward, Contractor; Mr. Kenneth McK. Wright, Advertising Agency President; Mr. Thomas Mah, Bank Manager; Alderman Harry Rankin, Lawyer; Treasurer, Sr. Emma Barrette; Secretary, Mr. R. G. Evans; Sr. Mary Anne Piette and Administrator Sr. Germaine Roy.

Since the opening of **Mount Saint Joseph Hospital** 25 years ago, there have been six Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception as Administrators: Sr. St. Jean-du-Redempteur, Sr. Margaret Farrell, Sr. St. Yves, Sr. Jean-Baptiste-du-Sauveur, Sr. Germaine Roy, Sr. Andree Dupuis and now once again, Sr. Germaine Roy.





Architect's drawing of future residence of Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.



And so with the help of the Regional District, the Provincial and Federal Governments, private donors and the high calibre of Staff – Administrative, Nursing, Medical, Mount Saint Joseph Hospital, the Oak Tree, continues to grow.

The outlook for the future is promising. We are about to have a new 150 bed Extended Care Hospital, an Emergency Ward, a new Day Care Centre, Operating Rooms and a Centralized Dietary System including Dining Rooms. To match this will be a general up-grading of all facets of the hospital to keep in step with these new additions to Mount Saint Joseph Hospital.



