

Nurses of Entry Island



Penicillin dropped by airplane during flu epidemic 1963

Introduction

This book is dedicated to all the nurses that worked on Entry Island.

A special thanks to C.A.M.I. who made this project possible.

Thank you to everyone who helped with pictures, information, and documents.

Research, computer layout and typesetting by Diane Chenell

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Compiled by;

Entry Island Historical Museum
Entry Island
Magdalen Islands
GOB-ICO

Telephone (418) 986-6622

Dec.2000

History of nurses

The first nurse to come to Entry Island was Nurse Gallant in 1932, her first name is unknown. She was a government nurse that came from the main land and lived with Island families.

The first Red Cross nurse was Mrs. Ann Shawnburg who came from England in 1945.

The first Red Cross building was owned by Felix Cassidy, an extension was built on for the clinic in 1948. In 1947-1948, there was no nurse on the Island, as it was not always easy to fill this position. Due to the lack of staff, there were midwives who assisted the nurse during childbirth, Jane Collins Dickson, Nancy Taker McLean, Maude McLean. It is not clear when the Unitee Sanitaire came to the Island but in the Fall 1974 our C.L.S.C. become the official health services of Entry Island. In July 1992 a new building was built and rented to the C.L.S.C. which is still used today.

The last baby to be born on the Island was Nathan Caissy in May 1994. Today babies are delivered at the Hospital in Grindstone. In case of an emergency, the Coast Guard is called.

Today there are two nurses working for the C.L.S.C. Sherry Welsh and Liane Gagnon. They rotate weekly. Sherry Welsh has worked as an Island nurse for 21 years. (1979-2000)

Nurses who worked on Entry Island

Nurse Gallant	1932
Evelyn Arsenault	1937
Clotide Hubert	1938
Dolora Delaney	1939-1940
Jessie MacNeil	1940-1941
Ann Shaunberg	1945
Haidee Pearce	1948-1957
Angus Tibbs	1958
Maggie Wilson	1959
Barbara Challis	June 1960-Nov.1961 Feb. 1963-Oct.1963
Margaret Rose	1961
Jean Young	1962
Mary Houton	1963
Elaine Wach	⁶²⁻ 1963
Nurse Casset	1964
Ann Robertson	1967-1974
Yvonne Derochee	1975-1976
Fay Griffith	Dec.1976-June 1979
Sherry Clark	1979-2000

Relief Nurses

Denise Gaudet
Carmen Renaud
Suzanne Bourgeois
Docile Boudreau
Line Bourgeois
Nathalie Coté
Marie Andrée Amiot
Line Langford
Martine Bourque
Nathalie Grenier
Marina Petitpas
Lucie Arseneau
Pierette Forest
Gorgette Cyr
Liane Gagnon

These people replaced the regular nurses during their scheduled time off and vacations.

Some nurses who worked on Entry



Clotide Hubert
1938



Dolora Delaney
1939



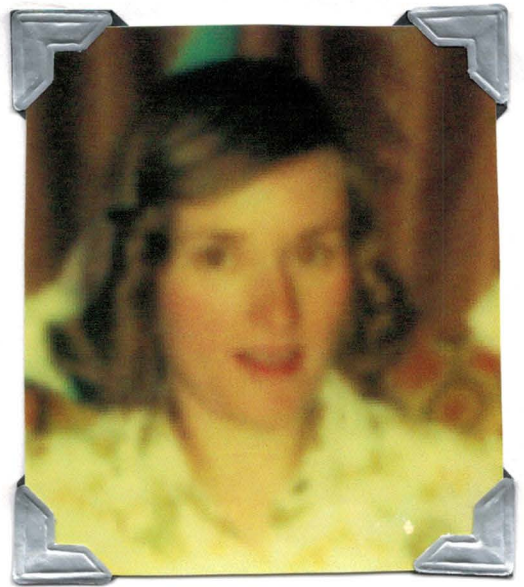
Maggie Wilson
1959



Barbara Challis
1960-1963



Jean Young
1962



Fay Griffith
1976-1979



Nathalie Coté
1992-1994



Nathalie Grenier
1998



Marina Petitpas



Gorgette Cyr
1999



Line Bourgeois



Sherry Clark Welsh
1979-2000



Charlyse Hameland



John Morrison's Bungalow was used as
the Red Cross post in 1963



The Red Cross house in 1960



The C.L.S.C. clinic of Entry Island 2000



Sherry Clark Welsh at work 2000

Jessie MacNeill

Jessie MacNeill, a young nurse from Quebec came to Entry Island in the fall of 1940. She stayed at the home of Richard McLean and in the spring 1941 she died.

The People of Entry Island built her a casket and painted it black. Kenneth McLean transported the casket by small boat to the Coast Guard that was anchored off Entry. Nurse MacNeill's body was returned to her family in Quebec.



Kenneth McLean taking Jessie MacNeill's body to the Coast Guard.



Memorial Service for Jessie MacNeill

Malapedia. P.O. 2ue.
Sunday, Jan'y 12/41.

My dear Mrs Welch:

This is to express my love and appreciation to you who gave your time and love in the making of the little casket in which my dear daughter was brought over. I was very disappointed that they changed the casket at Antigonish but as the Deputy minister of health looked after arrangements I did not know till the remains arrived, but Mildred told me in her letter of those who worked to make it and I am sure it would have been Jessie's wish to have been laid to rest in it.

Jessie loved the people of Entry and I could not persuade her to stay home this year. I trust you will have a nurse for the winter. You will see hear the news of her funeral from Mildred.

Again thanking you for all you have done for Jessie.

Sincerely,

(Mrs) Jessie Mac Neill.

ENTRY ISLAND, NURSING OUTPOST

ANNUAL REPORT 1952.

Another year has rolled around and 1952 was the busiest year since I came to the Outpost four years ago.

When in October of 1948 I arrived on Entry Island my first thought was "I'll stay this Winter, but first boat out in the Spring I'll be on her". Well Springs have come and gone and I'm still on Entry Island, I am now starting my fifth year and in all fairness to myself I do enjoy the Island, its people and their ways even if at times their ways are quite foreign. I think as the years come and go I understand the people and they understand me better. We all have our likes and dislikes and our petty grievances, and when all put together amount to nothing more than something to grouse about.

The Island has grown in four years, it can now boast of three new buildings namely (1) Red Cross House (2) A new Anglican Church (built by the people) and (3) a new modern school and last but by no means the least a new wharf which we hope, this summer will have an additional fifty feet added on, thus enabling larger boats to dock.

Five new homes have been built in the past four years.

Indoor plumbing and electric light plants have come to the Island, The population has increased, nine new families since 1949.

Progress too has come to the Islands in other ways. In the Spring of 1949 not one fishery boat boasted of a trip hauler, the Spring of 1952 will find every boat putling out to fish with a trap hauler, and engine. The women are gradually throwing away the wash board for the gasoline powered washing machine.

Bicycles, motor trucks and tractors have come to the Island and in time, like all other communities. Old Dobbin will be of no more use.

From January 1st of 1948 to December 31st of 1952 there were thirty two live births and one still born (one live baby died four hours after birth)

There were only five adult deaths in the same period, of the deaths one a young man was accidently killed while coasting, his mother past away ten months later from cancer, one quite elderly lady had a stroke and passed away within two hours, one woman who had been suffering from diabetis for years developped cancer of the stomach and passed away and three months later her sister a cardiac case was found dead in bed.

The year 1952 brought us many things for instance, in March a severe epidemic of measles visited us. It had been thirty years since an epidemic of measles or mumps invaded the Island. The last week of March and first two weeks of April everybody was in bed with the measles. Mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters. Of nearly 100 children only 11 escaped, there were no after effects and the children quickly regained lost weight. May, June and July saw the mumps (mild type). Only a comparative few were unlucky enough to "catch" the mumps.

November and December brought the flu a very severe form, four cases of pneumonia developed, we are happy to say all recovered.

Cod Liver Oil capsules, calcium pills and powdered milk were given to babies, preschools, school children and all maternity cases.

In December a Hospital Bed from the Red Cross loan cupboard was sent to the Outpost which is a great blessing.

CLINICS -

A group of doctors and nurses from the T.B. league in Montreal and Gaspé Sanatorium visited the Islands. In June a B.C.G. clinic was held at Red Cross House for all children up to 16 years, all were Patch tested and all with a negative reactions which are proud to say was, over half were given the B.C.G. vaccine.

In August chest X Ray clinics were held and 90% of the population were X Rayed. One 14 year old girl went to Gaspé for further check up but was found to be T.B. Negative.

I might add that two girls from the Island who have been receiving Sanatorium care have been discharged as arrested cases during 1952.

An eye clinic was held in November and a number of adults and school children were examined. Eight children were given glasses.

MATERNITY -

Six women registered for Prenatal and Post natal care during 1952. Two were delivered in hospital, two delivered at home and two are due in early 1953

Of the two delivered at home, one was delivered at Red Cross House. The patient intended to go to hospital but as we were leaving the shore the membranes ruptured, she was rushed to Red Cross House and 15 minutes later David Craig was born.

CHILD WELFARE -

There were 83 Infant welfare visits and 89 preschool visits made during 1952. Four immunization clinics were held and all babies, preschool and school children were vaccinated with the exception of one who was ill. All babies and preschools received combined diphtheria and whooping cough vaccine. Ten have received there first booster doses of vaccine.

The school was visited at least once a month and regret to say that pediculosis (Head lice) is still very much in evidence. I am sure there is only one reason, the mothers neglect to clean the children's heads.

MISCELLANEOUS -

The Red Cross House served as immergency hospital on several occasions, first during the measle epidemic we took in Eric Patten five months old, look after him while his mother, father, brothers and sisters had the measles

and naturally Eric had the measles also.

Secondly A young man who was hurt during a drunken brawl,,he came to the office for treatment and collapsed. We kept him three days than was sent to Grindstone Hospital.

Thirdly for the above-mentioned maternity case.

Mr. Pearce took over the nursing duties during the measles epidemic when I became ill with La Grippe, he did a very capable job. A total of 440 visits were made and 183 homes were visited.

In April due to the measles epidemic, the living room of Red Cross House served as a church. Two babies were christened by Rev. Mr. Kingston and Archdeacon Reed.

The Red Cross Outpost now have added ducks to thin flock of poultry.

The vegetable garden was a **success**, we find cabbage very difficult to grow and have decided we will not try again to grow it. Oats was grown this year. Seven bushels to one was harvested.

During the past three Winters we have discovered ways and means of weatherizing the Red Cross House and thus reducing the fuel bill and increasing our own comfort.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all those who in any way helped to make Mr. Pearce comfortable during his recent illness special thanks to Dr. Bazin for his interest and thoughtfulness to both my husband and myself.

In reading over this report I wonder if one understands the trials and of tribulations of the Outpost Nurse. The many things she is called upon to do especially in isolated regions: when Bossay the cow is sick or old Dobbin, when a special letter is to be written and a thousand and one little tasks done by lawyers, doctors, clergy social workers etc, in towns and Cities. The Outpost Nurse is never too busy to attend to all these little wants.

Sometimes the Outpost Nurse is a wonder, other time she is a horrible creature and the Nurse herself feels at times " My resignation will be in the next mail." but it never is, Why? The people are the most wonderful in the world even the dogs wave their tails when they see her coming.

A summary and comparison of 1952 - 1951

	<u>1952</u>	-	<u>1951</u>
Communicable diseases	229		nil
Office visits	295		294
Medical visits	400		296
Surgery visits	18		17
Paediatrics	223		24
Pre Natal	34		45
Home deliveries	2		6
Hospital deliveries	2		6
New Born Visits	44		55
Infant Welfare	85		115
Pre School	89		166
Other Public Health	<u>460</u>		<u>124</u>
TOTAL VISITS	1879		1142
TOTAL NO. OF HOMES VISITED	739		533
NURSING RECEIPTS	\$225.60		\$138.25

Respectfully submitted,

Haidee Pearce

HAIDEE PEARCE, R.N.
Red Cross Nurse.



ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
PROVINCE DE QUÉBEC

Ref: PA: 766-57

QUEBEC, May 2nd. 1957

Mrs Haidee Pearce, R.N.
Red Cross Nursing Station,
Entry Island,
Magdalen Islands, P.Q.

Dear Mrs Pearce :-

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of April 28th and I wish to thank you very sincerely for the good work you have accomplished while on Entry Island.

People of Entry Island and myself will be sorry to see you leave. I take note that Mrs Josey has been appointed Secretary of the Entry Island Welfare Association.

I remain,

Yours truly,


H.D. LANGLAIS,

Member for the Magdalen Islands.

HDL/YH

21 Collard Crescent
Barry
Vale of Glamorgan
CF62 9AQ

31st August 2000

Dear Diane,

I was very pleased to receive your letter and learn of your involvement in creating a Museum on Entry Island. I am happy to help you as much as I can. Here is my story.

In July 1959 Robina and I arrived in Canada to take a course at the Neurological Institute in Montreal. We had trained as General Nurses in England, with midwifery experience and were 23 years old. When we finished the course we were looking for something 'adventurous' to do and one day, when I was walking down a main street in Montreal I came across a building with a large Red Cross on the door. I went inside to enquire about the work of the Red Cross and in no time at all I was shown into the Director of Nurses office. "Come in, my dear," said this little French lady sitting behind a desk. "You are an answer to prayer." She proceeded to tell me that she needed a nurse for Entry Island and it sounded very interesting. I explained that I had come to Canada with a friend and we couldn't part company. "That is wonderful", she said. "I need a nurse for Grosse Ile also. So that is how we both came to the Magdalen Islands in the summer of 1960 at the age of 24.. Robbie went to Grosse Ile and lived in the Red Cross House there until she married Ralph Goodwin. I went to Entry Island and lived in the Red Cross house there. Everyone made me very welcome and I grew to love the Entry Islanders very much.

The Red Cross Organisation had been asked to establish an outpost on the English speaking islands of the Magdalens by the Bishop of Quebec following a visit in 1918 when a severe epidemic of influenza was raging. The nurse who preceded me was Maggie Wilson and before that a husband and wife lived in the Red Cross House. I can't recall their names but the wife was the nurse and the husband was some sort of advisor on farming. He was of German origin and I had the impression that he was not well liked. They were on Entry for quite a few years though. In November 1961 I felt the need to return home and to my dismay the Red Cross said they were not replacing me. I fought hard for a reversal of that decision and eventually Margaret Rose, who was also an English nurse was appointed. She didn't stay very long and Jim Young's wife came to live on Entry with her youngest child to care for the people. In those days the population was about 250 people. I had maintained contact with Jim and Jean Young and was now a Ward Sister and engaged to be married. However, I felt constrained to offer to return to Entry Island for six months until another nurse was found. It was the depths of winter and I returned at the beginning of February 1963 until October of that year. Eventually the responsibility for a nurse on Entry Island and Grosse Ile was taken over by the Quebec Nursing Service. Communications had improved and nurses were less isolated. They didn't have to order their food and medical supplies every six months from the Hudson Bay Company as we had to, and bake their own bread. Electricity meant washing machines and television and some breakdown of the community spirit. Larger fishing boats were built, with cabins for shelter from the weather, and children went away to complete their education.

During my stay, part of the Red Cross House was a clinic and people visited me there when they were worried about their health. The polio vaccine had just become available in injection form and most people came for that. I treated minor injuries and ailments and referred patients to the hospital in Grindstone if necessary. Every day I visited a different part of the island and called on the people living there to discuss any problems they had and to keep an eye on the young children's development. I delivered the babies, about 12 were born each year, and I found this quite stressful as the nearest doctor was 12 miles away across the sea. We travelled in open boats then, to Amherst or Grindstone to reach the hospital. On one occasion I had to call out the Canadian Search and Rescue helicopter to take an elderly patient to hospital in New Brunswick, and sometimes light aircraft pilots who were searching for seals off the Labrador coast in the winter were contacted to transport injured people to hospital.

We had no electricity in those days and often the babies were born by the light of kerosene lamps. Many mothers had ten children. They looked after the children, did the washing by hand, baked their own bread, milked the family cow and looked after any other animals kept in the barn. Their menfolk

would come home from fishing at all hours, hungry and thirsty. A pot of tea was kept at the back of the stove at all times and the main meals were of boiled potatoes and salt fish. This made people very thirsty and a barrel of water was kept in the porch of each house for visitors to dip in for a drink. Unfortunately this was a source for the spread of infection.

I was responsible for the health of the schoolchildren and sometimes I had to close the school because the toilets became blocked. It was decided that a new school should be built and I visited during its' construction to find that it was totally without toilets!. The plans had to be revised. I believe that school was destroyed by fire some years later. I taught first aid to the older children and tried to encourage them to continue their education. In those days it meant leaving the Islands and many children who went away came back almost immediately because they were homesick. To try to overcome this problem summer camps were organised on Brion Island so that children would have a taste of being away from home. The Reverend Jim Young founded these camps and they were not without their hazards. I was the camp nurse one year and one of the helpers, a student from America almost died of an asthmatic attack. We had to take her in a trailer on the back of a tractor to the lighthouse and send a message across for a rescue boat, late at night. She then had to travel down to the hospital in a truck. We were very relieved that she recovered. The tractor driver and I spent the night in the beds of the lighthouse keepers, only to discover they had chicken pox! We were none the worse for the experience though.

The weather was the cause of much anxiety for me because we couldn't cross to the main land if the wind was more than 15 miles per hour. In the winter ice flows came down from the coast of Labrador and sometimes filled in the channel between Entry Island and the Hook at Havre Aubert. When I first heard the men talk about an ice bridge I couldn't imagine what they meant. However, I had the chance to find out during that first winter and was allowed to travel with the men and their horses, although women were thought to bring bad luck. We got across the first time, but on another occasion we had to turn back because of the mush pans. It was a very cold and tiring journey but there were times when I felt the need to see a different view. There was just as much snow on the other side as there was on Entry that year, when snow came up to the bedroom windows.

For entertainment, we all visited each other and card parties were very popular. We had painting parties to help someone decorate their house and people helped me decorate the Red Cross House. The ladies would have 'hooking' parties, making rugs from sacks threaded with strips of material salvaged from old clothes. We had our own Concert Party and visited Grosse Ile, presenting little drama sketches and making music with various instruments. David Collins had taught himself to play the fiddle to overcome frost bite damage to his fingers. I had my violin with me and we used to play together on Sunday afternoons. David, and his wife Adeline took me under their wing and I spent a very happy Christmas with them. It was the custom for the horses to be decorated with bells and harnessed to sleighs carrying folk to visit one another on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. The community spirit was a great feature in those days, as was the home brewed beer!

The Church on Entry Island was an important meeting place too and services were conducted by the Anglican Minister who lived in Grosse Ile. Because the weather made his journeys unpredictable and sometimes impossible, Jim Young purchased a small aircraft which he could just about land in a small flat field. It could be dangerous but this was Jim Young's way of expressing his love for the people of Entry Island. I had taken some organ lessons prior to coming to Entry and played for the services in the church and for my own pleasure, when it wasn't too cold in there!

In total I spent just over two years on Entry Island; a very memorable and precious time for me, sharing the joys and sorrows of those I served. I keep in touch with Adeline Collins and we exchange letters at Christmas time. I was able to visit Entry briefly in 1991 with my husband, flown over by Craig Quinn. Ivan took us around on a whistle stop tour and it was wonderful to see old friends again. Bahan Chenell knew who I was immediately, which was very touching. He said he recognised my laugh! Robbie tells me he is still alive. Amazing.

When I returned to England the second time in 1963 I became a Health Visitor, which is like a Public Health Nurse in Canada. I married in 1964 and we have a son and two daughters, two grandsons and a granddaughter. I am now the Supervisor of Health Visiting Practice for the Vale of Glamorgan

and will be retiring in March next year. I have been blessed with health and happiness, a family and a satisfying career, the highlight of which was as an Outpost Nurse for the Entry Islanders.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell my story. I enclose some photographs for you.

1. The Red Cross House as it was in 1960
2. Miss Challis, as I was known then, with Wendel McLean, whom I delivered.
3. Some of the happy young children of the Island, in the Spring of 1961
4. Me, on the ice bridge, winter of 1960/61
5. Travelling to the Brion Island Summer Camp with Ralph Goodwin.
6. The Olympic Games Committee at the Summer Camp,. The cooks and Jean Young with her children Peter, Ruth and Jean. The building behind was the staff toilet!
7. Reverend Jim Young on Entry Island with his Piper Cub plane. Charlie Walsh assisting. Charlie was the Mail Man - a great character with a heart of gold.

I enclose a picture of Phyllis Dixon as a baby. She had a most beautiful complexion. Could you give it to her if it is possible, with my best wishes. I have one or two more slides that I will have developed as photographs for you, and the one of your husband, Dirk as a young child, with his twin sister Della.

Please give my warmest remembrances to all who knew me 40 years ago and I hope to visit your museum in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara

Barbara Butts nee Challis..

