

Chapter III – The Next Decade (1963–1973)

The next decade at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital contained very eventful years, bringing us to our present size. "Expansion" was the word heard on the lips of everyone. Phase I made possible a new boiler room and large laundry, so that these facilities would be ready for the future. These were completed and in use in 1966. The new smokestack (60 feet high), became a landmark - something like Nelson's Column in London. Then came the real push for campaign funds. Mr. Ed Alexander of "Community Relations Consultants" Toronto, was hired to be in charge. Mr. Robert B. Johnson of Grimsby, consented to be general Campaign Chairman. Co-Chairman was Mr. Beryl Stevenson of Beamsville, and Associate Chairman was Mr. Ross E. Hall of Grimsby.

A tremendous organization was set up of dedicated area men and women (more than 400 of them) to obtain funds for the most ambitious program yet. A handsome, purple and white brochure was printed for the campaign. The cover showed branches of sweet cherry blossoms and a "cut" of surgeons working under an OR lamp. It carried the words "It's a Good Life in Ontario's Garden. Save It. - West Lincoln Memorial Hospital \$495,000 Expansion Campaign."

The new services to be provided were:

- An Emergency Wing;
- An Intensive Care Unit;
- Two X-ray Rooms;
- Two Emergency Operating Rooms;
- Two General Operating Rooms;
- A Physiotherapy Department;
- An Updated Laboratory; and
- 68 Additional Beds.

Of this, Federal and Provincial grants through OHSC would be \$1,595,335 and County Debenture would be \$360,000, leaving a balance of \$495,000, which could only come from public subscription. The total cost of the entire expansion program when completed would be \$2,450,335.

A huge thermometer to show the way the money was being collected was painted on a sign out front and its progress was watched with much interest by everyone.

As the new wing known as Phase II gradually came into being, small groups of citizens toured the new place. Mr. Alexander's headquarters was the Board Room, where from checked red and white cloths and by the light of hurricane candles, coffee and doughnuts were consumed in the evening, ad lib, by these groups.

The Dietary department was the first to move into its new quarters in August of 1968 -one of the hottest, most humid weeks on record. The operation of a cafeteria was new to everyone but it has fulfilled its purpose.

Early in October, D Ward, with 26 new surgical beds, was opened and the next, Physiotherapy (a new service to the community) was ready for business. November saw the opening of the 4 bed Intensive Care Unit - a real step forward for a small Hospital.

In late September of that year, Lieutenant-Governor W. Ross MacDonald paid the Hospital a visit, while here to open officially Grimsby 101 - which became the annual art festival. There was a tea in his honour after which he toured the place and visited the Children's Ward, chatting with the young patients.

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Later the same month, the X-ray department opened its new enlarged facilities. It included the new portable \$7,500 X-ray unit. The OR Suite was opened in early September.

In December, C Ward opened making available 32 new medical beds.

These were very busy months. Miss MacRobbie stated in her Annual Report of that year, "working conditions at the Hospital from the first of August until the end of the year were far from ideal. At this point I would like to pay tribute to our Hospital staff - all members of every department, whose tremendous team effort reduced the inconvenience to a minimum".

In the fall of 1968, our Hospital participated in the Canadian Hospital Association's first course for Food Supervisors. Many staff members have availed themselves of the opportunity for advanced courses.

Staff members who were here in March of 1969 will remember the conversion to the Metric System. It seemed to be accomplished very smoothly.

The Gift Shop operated by the Women's Auxiliary, opened on the ground floor in 1969.

By the end of 1969, Phase III was ready for opening and hundreds of interested members of the public came to see the newest wing. This included Admitting, Out-Patient, Emergency, Laboratory, and Inhalation Therapy (now the ECG department).

The Quiet Room on the ground floor opened in 1970 but was eventually moved into a large lounge for the patients on the ground floor and their visitors.

A Ward was closed in the spring of 1973 and the VON have the 1st ward room as an office - the old "A" office is now our In-service department and the second ward room is an office used by our Discharge Planning Officer.

The Conference Room in the basement was refurnished and carpeted by the Women's Auxiliary and most of our hospital meetings are held there.

Miss MacRobbie and Miss Templin - retired in December 1972, and Miss Hoshal became the new Executive Director - Patient Services, and Mr. Gordon D. Gibson - Assistant Executive Director - General Services. To achieve Accreditation for the Hospital became a major objective in 1973. The Board of Governors, the Medical Staff and the Hospital Staff spent many hours reviewing the Bylaws, functions of the Medical Staff, and its committees, revising policy manuals, disaster plans, etc. And in January 1974, a team from the Canadian Council on Hospital Accreditation rewarded these efforts by acclaiming our Hospital worthy of accreditation.