



# NEWSLETTER



Spring 2013

camh



Friends of the CAMH Archives  
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## Toronto Asylum's Silver Artifacts Celebrated Optimism and Reform in 1846



Silver presentation trowel by J.G. Joseph, 1846, inscribed as a gift to the Hon. Chief Justice J.B. Robinson. Indefinite loan to the CAMH Archives through the courtesy of Robinson's heir-descendant, Ms. Philippa Elmhirst of York, U.K.

– Photo: Anne-Marie Jackson, CAMH

More information: please see the photo and caption on the last page of this issue: "**Historic Presentations, 167 Years Apart.**"

It is occasionally remarked that our early Queen Street facility, its patients and their afflictions, were stigmatized from the very outset – from the time that the Provincial Asylum was built, in 1845-50. On the evidence, however, it was not until the late-19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that public and official sentiment declined into stigma (prejudice and discrimination), as Ontario Asylums were assailed by government parsimony. An 1877 Provincial Government directive to Toronto's Superintendent Daniel Clark "was effectively to consign the institution to thirty years of official indifference and neglect." (T.E. Brown, 1980, 236-7)

On the other hand, evidence supports that beginning in the 1840s, the Toronto Asylum was established amid great optimism and enthusiasm. The reform ideas of the emerging Moral Treatment, or Moral Therapy, movement were excitedly received by Upper Canada's opinion leaders. Humane care and treatment took shape through the initiative of the Asylum Commissioners and their architect, J.G. Howard, who travelled abroad to study and ultimately adopt them.

The Asylum's Cornerstone Ceremony, held on 22 Aug. 1846, reflected this emerging optimism, pushing back against the long-standing societal stigma against "lunacy." Last Spring's issue of this newsletter reported the 2010 discovery and 2012 return to our custody of the 1846 silver Cornerstone Plaque; please see page 7:

[http://www.camh.ca/en/education/about/services/camh\\_library/Documents/FOASpring2012.pdf](http://www.camh.ca/en/education/about/services/camh_library/Documents/FOASpring2012.pdf)

As the above photo and caption indicate, CAMH is now preparing to display a second newly-returned treasure that offers tangible evidence of that era's clinical optimism – two silver artifacts from the 1846 Cornerstone Ceremony created to commemorate the Asylum's founding.

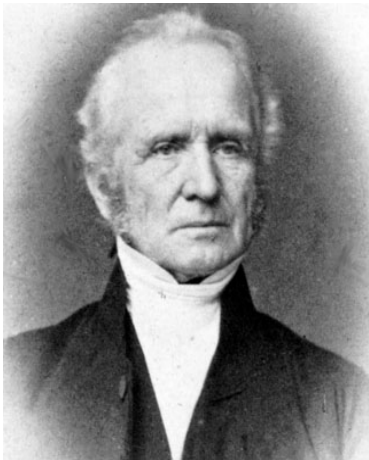
In contrast, facilities that remained stigmatized such as prisons typically enjoyed no such costly, tangible public celebrations. Moreover, supporting evidence from archival records document that three renowned and widely quoted public figures, who were quite familiar with, but independent of the Asylum, spoke in support of it as a symbol of optimistic advances in mental affliction care: Upper Canada's Chief Justice John Beverley Robinson, invited to officiate at this Cornerstone Ceremony; the Toronto *Globe's* founding publisher-editor, George Brown;

## 1846 Silver Artifacts (continued)

and the internationally-renowned, influential asylum reformer, Dorothea Dix.

A rival newspaper to Brown's, the *British Colonist*, reported at length on the 1846 ceremony's lustrous procession, led by the band of the 81<sup>st</sup> Regiment, from the Government House on King Street West to the Queen Street construction site. The platform party constituted a who's-who of officialdom from government, cultural organizations and professional societies. A large crowd of public onlookers turned out to line the streets from Government House and view this celebration of the Asylum's emerging foundations.

Chief Justice Robinson, "having spread the mortar, which he did dexterously, the stone was lowered to its destined place... Mr. Howard then presented His Lordship with a splendid silver trowel [photo, page 1], manufactured by our townsman, Mr. J.G. Joseph," which was suitably inscribed.



**Sir John Beverley Robinson (1791–1863)**

Courtesy of Trinity College Archives, Toronto.

Family history: *The Saga of the Robinsons, 1520 – 2011* by Philippa Elmhirst (York Publishing Services, 2011).

In his keynote address, Robinson identified the mentally ill as meriting universal concern, rather than the more-usual wariness or abhorrence. "The number of persons here assembled... proves the interest with which the public regards this institution; for the foundation has been this day laid of a very noble work." "A society

should be judged by its provision for this greatest of human miseries." "The erection of this asylum will form hereafter an event of no light interest in the history of Canada. It will mark the time from which one distressing want has been effectually supplied."

When the Asylum accepted its first 211 patients on 26 Jan. 1850, transferred from the Temporary Asylum (thence closed), George Brown's *Globe* published a feature series on the state of mental illness care and the new institution's role and prospects. As to the completed building: "The whole is exceedingly handsome, commodious, healthful and safe. We feel proud of the institution, such as it is; and thanks are due to the parties who have reared it..." (31 Jan. 1850, p.2)

Two days later Brown expressed the hope that the Asylum's board "will aim at something much higher than a ready transfer of the old machinery to the new building, and its mere adaptation for smooth working; they should make a *great institution*." Moreover, one "where every good part of human nature is brought into play. We hope that the Institution, for which so much has been done, will be pointed to as a sample of what Canadians can do." (2 Feb. 1850, p.3)



**Dorothea Lynde Dix (1802–1887)**, photoengraving from a portrait presented by Dix to the Dartmouth Asylum. Metal & wood engraving block, CAMH Archives.

In terms of canvassing our third independent opinion-leader of that era, Dorothea Dix (1802–1887) was one of that century's most remarkable mental health reformers. Based in her native New England, Dorothea was well aware of

Canadian mental illness facilities and treatments – or their lack – then evolving in conjunction with those of Britain and the U.S. Yet she felt a need to carry her crusade northward on only a few occasions – usually into the Maritimes, and twice during the 1850s for brief visits to the Provincial Asylum and its Superintendent, Dr. Joseph Workman.

Dix's little-noticed first visit to Queen Street took place in 1853-4, shortly after Workman's appointment. Then in 1856, toward the end of her extended European tour of mental illness facilities, she met with the writer, Susanna Moody in England. Moody was also familiar with Queen Street, having written about touring the Asylum and meeting a patient whom she believed was Grace Marks (later the heroine of Margaret Atwood's novel, *Alias Grace*).

Dix by then had expressed admiration for Workman's recent journal article bemoaning the regrettable state of mental illness care and treatment in Ireland – a view that she shared. Moreover both Dix and Workman were prominent Unitarian Church members. Moody quite possibly recommended that Dix make a detour on her way back home for a return visit to Toronto's Asylum.

While here for that visit, Dix wrote a letter to a U.S. friend on the generally unsatisfactory state of care for insane and challenged persons. But she appears to have been addressing the international scene universally, since she made neither reference nor implications to Canadian matters. Workman's Superintendent's Report for 1856 made note that she appeared to have been fully satisfied, while commenting:

*“To that indefatigable philanthropist and firm friend of the insane in all lands, Miss D.L. Dix, we are under obligations for a renewed visit and a close examination of every part of both asylums [Queen Street and the ‘University Branch’]. We have also to thank this lady for a valuable present of coloured engravings for the decoration of our rooms and corridors.”*

– John Court

## Hewton & Griffin Bursaries – Award Synopses for 2013

(1) **Brianne Collins** – Ph.D. student,  
Psychology, University of Calgary

Working Title: *“Thousands Could be Cured!”:  
Psychosurgery in Canada, 1941-1970.*

In March of 1947, Liberty Magazine published a startling article titled “Canada’s Shame: Our Mental Hospitals.” The article’s author, a past director of Canada’s National Committee for Mental Hygiene, sharply criticized Canada’s care of the institutionalized mentally ill.

Despite the rampant overcrowding and misuse of physical restraints, LeBourdais (1947) confidently asserted that: “Thousands could be cured!” (p. 8). He was referring to the prefrontal lobotomy/leucotomy, a neurosurgical treatment developed in the mid-1930s in Portugal and first used in Canada in 1941. Despite the hope that Canadians like LeBourdais placed in this treatment, very limited work has been completed on the history of psychosurgery in Canada.

My doctoral dissertation will build on the work that I completed for my master’s thesis: “Ontario’s Leucotomy Program: The Roles of Patient, Physician, and Profession.” Given the success of my project on Ontario, I am pursuing a more ambitious project. Using available archival sources across Canada, my dissertation will focus on two aspects of the use of psychosurgery in Canada.

First, I will evaluate whether the national spread of psychosurgery was a result of the influence of the Canadian medical establishment (e.g., physicians, administrators) or due to the influence of American physicians. Second, I plan to address a continuing controversy surrounding gender in the practice of psychosurgery. This Bursary will facilitate visiting 10 Canadian cities and their corresponding provincial archives to gather the required archival documents.

(2) **Sarah Doerksen** – M.A. student, History,  
Carleton University

My thesis will examine the intersection between psychiatry and the public by comparing shifts in the way the public conceptualizes schizophrenia to developments within psychiatry, notably the standardization of diagnosis and the publication of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). This longitudinal study will compare qualitative descriptions of “dementia praecox” and “insanity” in archival records and in articles published by the *Ottawa Citizen* preceding the development of DSM, from 1883 to 1950.

It will then compare descriptions of “schizophrenia” in the records of the Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA) and in articles published in the *Ottawa Citizen* after the standardization of diagnosis, from 1950 to 2012.

I will contextualize changes to the way in which schizophrenia is conceptualized by comparing the perspectives of the psychiatric profession and the public to perspectives of individuals affected by schizophrenia, through a study of patient accounts. This study will call attention to the ways in which schizophrenia has been conceptualized historically, to emphasize the malleability of this process as well as to provoke discussion for improving the representation of schizophrenia in the public domain.

(3) **Victoria Fenner** – documentary film  
producer and journalist, Hamilton, Ontario

Working Title: *Mrs. Rochester of the Bush – A Video Documentary*.

A year ago, I discovered that my great-great-grandmother had been a patient in three of Canada's earliest asylums: Queen Street; Malden; and the London Asylum. I am in the early stages of producing a documentary and will use the bursary funds to do research and record video interviews, specifically about: daily life and conditions at the Toronto Lunatic Asylum from 1858 to 1862, when my grandmother was a patient; attitudes of rural Ontario society

regarding mental illness; and early diagnoses and treatment of mental illness.

I believe that the combination of my ancestor's personal story combined with a history of the earliest days of mental health treatment in Ontario will make a fascinating documentary.

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**The Politics of Reproduction: Birth Control, Eugenics, and the Canadian Left, 1892 – 1969**

– **Lorne Beswick, Hewton Bursary Recipient**

Birth control or red regime? Such was the stark choice confronting Canadians in 1937, at least according to one pro-contraceptive commentator of the Eastview Birth Control Trial, an event that effectively ended prosecutions of those Canadians promoting contraception. Some, however, considered birth control to be the first installment of a radical revolution that would strike at the very core of the values the nation was founded upon.

Invariably, discussion and debate ruled the day. Should women more than men have authority over such issues? Was talking about reproduction an inescapable responsibility of an informed, modern citizen? How would older concepts of morality and propriety interact with these new understandings of the body, or the increasingly popular field of eugenics?



The author (left, rear) and friends at the annual conference of the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine, in Waterloo, May 2012.

Should the state regulate reproduction to weed out ‘the unfit’? For all their evident and voluble disagreement, both sides of the argument could agree on one thing: the politics of reproduction raised issues that extended into every aspect of their lives.

My proposed doctoral research, *The Politics of Reproduction: Birth Control, Eugenics, and the Canadian Left, 1892-1969*, will examine these and other core questions. I am particularly interested in looking at the public intellectuals and political activists who developed these issues and the ways they influenced each other. The arguments put forward by these political and sexual radicals, for example, will be contextualized alongside the social and cultural networks in which they operated. In broad strokes, my thesis, focused as it is on the politics of reproduction as they were articulated outside the political and social mainstream, will add a new perspective to the historiography that has, for the most part, depended upon the corridors of officialdom.

The time and support afforded to me, by the CAMH Archives and Friends-of (FOA), benefited me in more ways than I can count. It was especially difficult to see the many clippings of Dr. William Lorne Hutton, the pamphlets of Alvin Ratz Kaufman, the stern sensibilities of Dr. Helen MacMurchy, or the colourful anecdotes of Charles Kirk Clarke (the latter two of whom helped found the Canadian National Committee on Mental Hygiene (CNCMH) in 1918) as anything other than the outdated and offensive advocates of a failed science. Rather than a simple passing of judgments, however, my dissertation will instead attempt to understand why Canada's eugenic elite acted as they did, and what informed the choices that they ultimately made.

Quite often, transposed into different contexts, eugenic ideas functioned in surprising ways. Attention to such contexts can help us understand the historical complexity of Canada's politics of reproduction. Ultimately I hope to explore a vital question in Canadian history – how was human reproduction understood, policed and transformed? – by looking at the political and sexual radicals that made it a part of

national debates, and their daily lives as well.

I would be remiss were I to neglect the integral role that the CAMH Archives and FOA have played in my brief academic career. In addition to the rich holdings of the Griffin-Greenland fonds, the funding provided by the Hewton Bursary enabled me to attend the 2012 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Waterloo, where I presented the contraceptive and eugenical dimensions of Toronto's “red” wives during the 1937 Eastview Birth Control trial. Finally, I cannot begin to express my thanks for the warm support that archivist and professor John Court gave me during my visits to Toronto. His ready assistance and endless patience were a welcome refuge from the often cloistered existence of graduate school.

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## TAKING TORONTO'S HEALTHCARE HISTORY

Conference held on Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**Taking Toronto's Healthcare History**  
 17:00h-21:00h Friday November 23 2012  
 8:00h-17:00h Saturday November 24 2012  
 University of Toronto, Medical Sciences Building, MacLeod Aud.  
 2158-1 King's College Circle, Room 2158  
 For further information please contact Juan.McKnight@utoronto.ca

Appreciating our history. Building a community. Fostering collaborations. Preserving our past.  
 Health, Arts and Humanities Program • History of Medicine Program • Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology  
 The Centre for Interprofessional Education • Faculty of Medicine • Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing  
 Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy • Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy  
 Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work • The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library • Undergraduate Medical Education  
 The Wilson Centre • The Royal Ontario Museum

AMS  
 TORONTO

In 2010, a group of healthcare professionals and educators at the University of Toronto came together with a shared interest in heightening the visibility of resources, collaborative research and opportunities for scholars in healthcare history at the University and in the wider community.

These photos are selected from the inaugural, well-attended conference held in November.



Keynote speaker – author and University Professor Emeritus Michael Bliss



Photos courtesy of Jenna Roy



## Notice of Annual General Meeting

to be held on Wednesday, May 15, 2013

NOTICE is hereby given that the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the CAMH Archives will be held on Wednesday, May 15, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. in the Training Room, Paul Christie Community Centre, at CAMH's Queen Street site. All interested are cordially invited to attend. Light refreshments will be available.

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## President's Report for 2012

– Vivienne Gibbs



The "Friends" have continued to support the Workman Arts "Rendezvous with Madness Film Festival". The documentary film symposium included the seminal *Titicut Follies* (1967) as well as contemporary docs. Our Board member, Thelma Wheatley, is to be congratulated on the launch of her book *And Neither Have I Wings to Fly*, on April 18<sup>th</sup> 2013.

Two promising academic researchers as well as a documentary film producer/journalist will share the annual Hewton and Griffin Bursaries, once again expanding the media used for public education about mental illness and addiction. The Greenland Acquisition Fund helped with the costs of bringing back home the 1846 Asylum cornerstone plaques.

Expenditures for the year ended Dec. 31, 2012 amounted to \$9,801, largely for our Hewton & Griffin Bursaries' allocations, the finder's fee portion of the retrieval costs for the cornerstone plaques, and annual subscriptions & memberships (the latter reduced from previous years). Revenues received were \$6,966 from donations, the Lil Hewton Estate trust fund (TCF), the Ministry grant, membership fees,

interest income and new books sold. Details will appear in the Audited Financial Statements to be presented at the forthcoming AGM.

With your continued support we will continue to fulfill our mandate. I heartily invite you to our AGM and wish you a bountiful summer!

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## *Discovering Greenland – My Friendship with Cyril*

By James FitzGerald



Award-winning author and Hewton Bursary recipient, James FitzGerald (left) has prepared a personal memoir, linked to his professional website, of his friendship with the late Cyril Greenland (right). Please see James's website and scroll well down: <http://www.jamesfitzgerald.info/Madness.html>

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## Friends of the Archives

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### Board Members :

Vivienne Gibbs (President), Carol Hopp, Edward Janiszewski (Admin Secretary), Shirley Morriss (Co-editor), Thelma Wheatley (Co-editor), Aden Roberts.

**Friends' Support People:** Yves Boissel, John McClellan, Marshall Swadron

**CAMH Liaison:** John Court

## Hewton and Griffin Bursaries for Archival Research in 2014

The Friends of the Archives at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), dedicated to the history of Canadian psychiatry, mental health and addiction, have established two endowment funds. These funds annually provide bursaries in memory of their late colleagues, Ms. E.M. (Lil) Hewton and Dr. J.D.M. (Jack) Griffin, O.C.

The main purpose of the bursaries is to provide financial assistance to students, and others not necessarily associated with an academic institution, who propose to undertake archival research on an aspect of the history of mental health or addiction in Canada. The FOA board at its discretion may approve bursaries to a maximum of \$2,500 each.

There is no application form. Candidates are invited to submit a letter of intent not exceeding 300 words, together with a budget and résumé, not later than November 30, 2013. These awards are conditional on the bursary holders agreeing to submit progress reports within one year, and a final report including a financial synopsis within two years of receiving the bursary.

Please submit an application for the year 2014 by the November 30th, 2013 deadline to:

Vivienne Gibbs – President, Friends of the Archives  
CAMH, 1001 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M6J 1H4  
Or by e-mail: John.Court@camh.ca



### **HISTORIC PRESENTATIONS, 167 Years Apart:**

On August 22, 1846, the Chief Justice of Upper Canada, the Honourable (and later Sir) John Beverley Robinson, laid the cornerstone for the Provincial Asylum with this silver trowel, during an outdoor ceremony amid a large crowd of cheering civic officials and onlookers. Both the trowel's inscription and the "British Colonist" newspaper have recorded that the architect, John G. Howard, then presented the trowel to Chief Justice Robinson, as a tribute to his presiding role in the ceremony and for his stirring keynote address. This year, through her public-spirited generosity, along with enthusiasm for CAMH's recovery last year of the ceremony's silver Cornerstone plaques, Mrs. Philippa Elmhirst (above, with trowel) of York, U.K. – Robinson's descendant and their family biographer – initiated an official Letter of Agreement for returning the trowel to Canada and CAMH for public display. Photo courtesy of Philippa and Paul Elmhirst.

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## **Membership Renewal Notice for 2013**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefix: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

\* **Membership:**           \$ **20.00**           (valid through December 31, 2013)

\* **Donation:**           \$ \_\_\_\_\_           (optional, at your discretion)

**Total:**                 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**\* An Income Tax receipt will be provided for your membership remittance plus any further donation. Please complete and mail this form together with a cheque, payable to "Friends of the Archives"**

**Please remit:** Friends of the CAMH Archives, 1001 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ontario M6J 1H4