



Rest Haven Sanitarium as it was in the early years of its operation.

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Rest Haven Sanitarium/ Rest Haven Hospital

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Rest Haven Sanitarium (also Rest Haven Hospital) was an Adventist health institution located in Sidney, British Columbia, off the Saanich Peninsula, from 1921 to 1978. The sanitarium was situated on its own island, in Shoal Bay on the Straits of Georgia.¹ A bridge was built connecting the sanitarium to the mainland²

History of the Institution

Plans for Resthaven began in 1912 with a group of Victoria businessmen who wanted a retreat. The Island Building and Investment Co. Ltd. was formed to build a luxury hotel. Samuel McClure (1860-1929), a prominent Canadian architect, was hired to design the structure. Due to financial difficulties, a second company, the North Saanich Hydropathic Co. Ltd. was formed. They proposed building on "Sheep Island" (later renamed Rest Haven Island). The building was completed in July 1913 at a cost of \$75,000 and christened Resthaven on August 4. World War I contributed to its closure on February 1, 1915. It remained vacant until December 1916 when it became a military hospital for the next three years. On November 15, 1919, the military closed the hospital, and the building was vacant again. In March 1921 the property was acquired by Mr. J. McNaughton who sold it to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.³ It was reported that \$125,000 had been invested in the facility that was sold to the church for approximately \$40,000.⁴

On September 29, 1921, it was announced that the building would be renovated inside and out and made into a sanitarium. It was renamed "Rest Haven" instead of "Resthaven." The first patients arrived on December 31, 1921.⁵ When the institution opened in 1922, it was "equipped with electricity, steam heat, and hot and cold running water. It makes a strong appeal to those who are sick or tired and in need of relaxation and rest. The treatment rooms are provided with reclining electric-light-bath cabinet, Russian bath, needle sprays, and salt glow and massage facilities."⁶ On his first visit, March 5-6, 1922, Dr. A. W. Truman (1884-1977) conducted ten operations.⁷ The next year Truman was called to the General Conference Medical Department, and he was replaced by Dr. O. S. Parrett (1888-1977)⁸, who was a recent graduate of the Loma Linda College of Medical Evangelists.⁹

During the first seven months the sanitarium made enough money to cover its operating expenses!¹⁰ The first class of nursing students began instruction in 1922. Dr. H. W. Miller (1879-1977), on his way to China, gave the first commencement address at the graduate of the first ten nursing students on August 15, 1925!¹¹ The training school lasted until 1938 and during this time 68 nurses received nursing certificates. Within a year (1923), the sanitarium had expanded to include seven buildings on the seven-acre property, with rooms for 60 patients. It was recorded that in 1923 755 patients were treated.¹² They also baptized two patients.¹³ Facilities continued to expand through the 1920s. In 1924 the sanitarium built a greenhouse out of recycled glass X-ray plates!¹⁴ Dr. Parrett (1888-1977)¹⁵ became the first Adventist to broadcast on the radio with a series of health talks in 1922!¹⁶ He broadcast from Station CHCE Victoria and had listeners from southern California to Iowa who tuned in. One listener who tuned in was the Portland Cement business magnate Robert Pim Butchart (1856-1943), who along with his wife, Jennie (1866-1950), created the famous Butchart Gardens in Victoria, British Columbia, on their property. The Butcharts were early patients of the sanitarium and frequently brought other guests back with them to Rest Haven and other Adventist sanitariums.¹⁷ The radio lectures by Dr. Parrett were so influential that at one point, when he spoke about the dangers of white bread, he apparently "ruined" the local baker's "sale of

white bread for the day” and doubled “the demand for brown bread.”¹⁸ As word spread about the success of the sanitarium in treating patients, patronage increased.

A small congregation began in the area soon after the sanitarium was formed. A Missionary Volunteer Society was first organized in 1922, and several early Adventist missionaries came to the Rest Haven to recuperate during furlough.¹⁹ A small Adventist school was also organized with six students that same year.²⁰ This attempt was short-lived, but another attempt was made in 1925.²¹ Other additions in 1925 included a laundry, elevator, and a new pumping and water system.²² The local church at the sanitarium continued to grow with a membership of 51 by September 1925.²³

In 1926 a special campaign was launched to reduce the \$70,000 institutional debt.²⁴ In 1927 Harold Grainger Burden (1898-1968) became superintendent (he had been Dr. Parrett’s assistant).²⁵ He was soon joined by Dr. Samuel W. Leiske (1898-1983)²⁶ as part of the medical staff.²⁷ By 1928 the sanitarium became also known as “Rest Haven Hospital.”²⁸ Patients would take the sanitarium “launch” or boat, dubbed the *Wildeflower*, on special trips to nearby Shell Island.²⁹ In 1929 a private room with bath, had a weekly rate of \$42 to \$59.50; private rooms without a bath ranged between \$28.00 to \$35.00; semi private rooms (two beds per room) was \$25.00; and wards (with three to four beds) had a weekly rate of \$21.00.³⁰ The Adventist sanitarium had by this time brought “definite prestige to our work.”³¹

In 1930 a major improvement was the installation of a “Ray Rotary Oil Burner” furnace to replace the “endless hauling of wood.”³² They also procured six Holstein cattle to help them have their fresh dairy products.³³ Each month the herd produced 700 gallons of milk and 200 quarts of cream.³⁴ Guests were also treated to a new miniature golf course added that same year.³⁵ Beginning in 1931 the company that had begun meeting was formally organized into a church on the sanitarium property.

In 1934 the Rest Haven Sanitarium was given responsibility of healthcare for three Native Peoples tribes. Adventists across Canada banded together to raise \$600 to add additional treatment rooms for this purpose.³⁶ In 1937 church leaders reminded Adventist members that due to the “tremendous debt” the institution was “struggling” and could not offer free healthcare. While members could count on the “very best of treatment at Rest Haven Sanitarium at the lowest possible rate,” they should “not expect to receive more than that.”³⁷

The 1960s witnessed several failed attempts to build a replacement facility. In 1962 T. J. Bradley proposed a new 120-bed hospital facility but failed to secure sufficient funding.³⁸ Five years later the government requested that the denomination build a new 200-bed hospital on a 20-acre tract of land as the facilities at Rest Haven were aging. The government agreed to contribute 95% of the cost.³⁹ It is unclear what happened to this proposal, but the new hospital was not built. The aging facility, built of wood and containing dated equipment, became increasingly difficult to maintain and was inadequate for advancements in healthcare. Instead, the opening of a nearby new medical facility, the Saanich Peninsula Hospital, in 1974, combined with Rest Haven’s lack of modern healthcare equipment and its long-term debt eventually led to Rest Haven’s permanent closure on April 10,

1978.⁴⁰

Shortly after Rest Haven's closure, the building was demolished and replaced with a townhouse complex. The perimeter of the island today forms the Resthaven Linear Park, a popular place for nature walks in downtown Sidney. On July 5, 1982, the Adventist denomination opened a new 74-bed retirement facility, Rest Haven Lodge, named after the Sanitarium and constructed at 2281 Mills Road in Sidney for 3.3 million Canadian dollars.⁴¹ It was described as a comfortable residence for the elderly.⁴² On April 1, 2018, the facility was merged with Broadmead Care.⁴³

Leaders

Superintendents: A. W. Truman (1921-1922); Owen Samuel Parrett (1922-1927); Harold Grainger Burden (1927-1929); John Reith (1929); S. W. Leiske (1929-1933); Harold Grainger Burden (1933-1939); A. N. Hanson (1939-1941); W. H. Roberts (1941-1954); R. O. West (1954-1955).

Administrators: F. L. Hommel (1921-1925); O. S. Parrett (1925-1927); F. T. Palmer (1927-1929); J. M. LeMarquand (1929-1931); H. A. Shepard (1931-1937); W. E. Perrin (1937-1939); E. S. Humann (1939-1943); H. A. Munson (1943-1948); C. M. Crawford (1948-1954); A. G. Rodgers (1954-1962); Thomas J. Bradley (1962-1971); F. L. Bell (1971-1975); D. L. Dunfield (1975-1978).

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"From the Victoria Paper." *Western Canadian Tidings*, July 22, 1930.

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Ruskjer, S. A. "Dr. Parrett on the 'Air.'" *Western Canadian Tidings*, February 10, 1925.

NOTES

1. W. G. Forshaw, "Rest Haven," *Western Canadian Tidings*, February 1, 1922, 2.
2. It is unclear when the original bridge was built. By 1929 there is a reference to pouring cement to reinforce the retaining walls that wearing away "the island wall." See "Rest Haven News," *Western Canadian Tidings*, July 2, 1929, 4.
3. Bard R. Morrison, "From the Archives: Resthaven: A Haven of Rest," *Sidney by the Sea: Town Talk*, October 2016, 5-6 [<http://www.sidney.ca/Assets/Administration/2016/October+2016+Town+Talk.pdf>, accessed 12/11/22].
4. "Patients are to be Treated at Resthaven," *The Victoria Daily Times*, December 31, 1921, 11.
5. T. Ray Lukens, "Read This," *Western Canadian Tidings*, November 1, 1922, 2.
6. See advertisement, *The Canadian Watchman Magazine*, August 1922, 34.
7. See note, *Western Canadian Tidings*, March 15, 1922, 2, 5.
8. Obit. *ARH*, December 22, 1977, 23; <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/36536699/owen-samuel-parrett> [accessed 12/11/22]
9. L. R. Anderson, "Farewell and Welcome," *Western Canadian Tidings*, September 6, 1922, 2; "News from Rest Haven," *Western Canadian Tidings*, August 23, 1922, 3.
10. T. Ray Lukens, "Read This," *Western Canadian Tidings*, November 1, 1922, 2.
11. S. A. Ruskjer, "The Rest Haven Sanitarium," *Western Canadian Tidings*, September 1, 1925, 1.
12. *Seventh-day Adventist Conferences, Missions and Institutions: The Sixty-first Annual Statistical Report, Year Ending December 31, 1923* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1924), 11.
13. See note, *ARH*, March 13, 1924, 21; W. G. Forshaw, "Rest Haven," *Western Canadian Tidings*, January 30, 1924, 3, 4.

14. "The Rest Haven Sanitarium," *Western Canadian Tidings*, September 30, 1924, 1.
15. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/36536699/owen-s-parrett> [accessed 12/14/22]
16. S. A. Ruskjer, "Dr. Parrett on the 'Air,'" *Western Canadian Tidings*, February 10, 1925, 1-2.
17. "Sanitarium News Items," *Western Canadian Tidings*, September 15, 1925, 4; O. S. Parrett, "Making Use of the Radio for Health Talks," *ARH*, December 30, 1926, 20, 21.
18. "Rest Haven News," *Western Canadian Tidings*, February 8, 1927, 5.
19. "Rest Haven Notes," *Western Canadian Tidings*, October 4, 1922, 10. Other notable missionaries include John E. Ford who visited in 1928. See "Rest Haven News," *Western Canadian Tidings*, June 26, 1928, 7.
20. "Our Church School Work," *Western Canadian Tidings*, September 20, 1922, 6.
21. "B. C. Notes," *Western Canadian Tidings*, August 25, 1925, 4.
22. S. A. Ruskjer, "The Rest Haven Sanitarium," *Western Canadian Tidings*, September 1, 1925, 1.
23. "Report of Tithe and 60c-a-Week Fund Offerings," *Western Canadian Tidings*, September 29, 1925, 6.
24. S. A. Ruskjer, "Get Out of Debt," *Western Canadian Tidings*, November 16, 1926, 8.
25. Obit. *ARH*, June 6, 1968, 23.
26. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/198256736/samuel-w.-leiske> [accessed 12/14/22]
27. "Rest Haven News," *Western Canadian Tidings*, January 17, 1928, 3.
28. "Rest Haven News," *Western Canadian Tidings*, May 8, 1928, 7.
29. "Rest Haven News," *Western Canadian Tidings*, November 13, 1928, 7; repairs were done to the "Sanitarium launch" in 1930, see: "Rest Haven News," *Western Canadian Tidings*, February 18, 1930, 7.
30. J. M. A. LeMarquand, "Rest Haven Rates," *Western Canadian Tidings*, November 26, 1929, 8.
31. H. A. Lukens, "British Columbia Conference," *ARH*, December 26, 1929, 29.
32. "Rest Haven News," *Western Canadian Tidings*, February 25, 1930, 7.

33. See news announcement, *Western Canadian Tidings*, May 13, 1930, 8.
 34. "National Hospital Day at Rest Haven," *Western Canadian Tidings*, May 20, 1919, 5.
 35. "From the Victoria Paper," *Western Canadian Tidings*, July 22, 1930, 5.
 36. M. N. Campbell, "The Indians," *Canadian Union Messenger*, May 29, 1934, 2; H. G. Burden, "Caring for the Indians at Rest Haven," *Canadian Union Messenger*, May 29, 1934, 2.
 37. W. B. Ochs, "A Word of Caution," *Canadian Union Messenger*, January 5, 1937, 2.
 38. "120-Bed Hospital Proposed at Sidney: Rest Haven Plan Calls for \$1.5 Million Unit," *Victoria Daily Times*, October 3, 1962, 15.
 39. North American Division Committee on Administration, January 26, 1967, 7.
 40. "Hospital Closing," *Victoria Times Colonist*, March 30, 1978, 26.
 41. Kathleen C. Piper, "A New Rest Haven Returns to the Peninsula," *Canadian Messenger*, September 2, 1982, 12.
 42. <http://www.adventisthealth.ca/rest-haven-lodge/> [accessed 12/11/22].
 43. <https://www.goldstreamgazette.com/local-news/sidneys-rest-haven-lodge-to-merge-with-broadmead-care/> [accessed 12/11/22]
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