

MOUNTAIN INSTITUTIONS PLAQUED

This autumn will see the completion of a project that began 12 years ago by the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society (HMHS) to have a City of Hamilton heritage plaque placed in front of each of the three major medical institutions on the Hamilton Mountain: the Mountain Sanatorium (Chedoke Hospital), the Mountain Hospital (Henderson/Juravinski) and the Asylum (Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital).

These plaques, written by leading members of HMHS and funded or aided by the society were designed to recognize the great contribution that these institutions have made to the history of Hamilton and its Mountain heritage. The Sanatorium plaque, was installed in a small park near the corner of Rice and Sanatorium Avenues in 2006 for the hospital's centennial celebration. A Nora Frances Henderson plaque was installed on Concession Street in front of the Henderson Wing of the Juravinski Hospital this spring. Finally, after twelve years of delay due to construction at the Asylum site, the heritage of the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital will be recognized with a plaque near the corner of West 5th and Fennell Avenue. The following is the story of the asylum, one of Canada's great medical institutions that will now be recorded for posterity.

*"Initially intended in 1867 as a place of detention for 'inebriates', the Hamilton Asylum for the Insane was established on this 100-acre site, purchased from Isaac Buchanan of Auchmar and Mrs. William Gourlay. The first structure, the **Barton Building**, opened in 1876 with Dr. R. Bucke, internationally known for his humane treatment of the mentally ill, as the first Medical Superintendent. The hospital grew quickly to meet the expanding health needs of the province. By 1909 it contained 529 acres and facilities for 1,200 patients and staff. Renamed the Ontario Hospital, Hamilton, in 1929, it was recognized as the best asylum in Ontario. Advances in the treatment of mental illness led to significant changes. By 1956, all but 86 acres of the farmland that made the hospital self-sufficient and provided physical therapy for patients, had been auctioned off for residential and Community College development. In 1968, the institution was renamed the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital (HPH).*

*With the construction of new buildings, three of the century-old original buildings were demolished except for East House, built in 1884 and renamed **Century Manor** in 1972. It continued as a Day Patient facility until it was closed in 1995. As the last of the original Hamilton Asylum Victorian facilities and one of the few*

remaining in the province, it was designated a heritage building under the Ontario Heritage Act in 1997.

The era of provincial hospitals ended in 2000 with the administration transferred to community hospitals. HPH was renamed St. Joseph's Centre for Mountain Health Care Services. With extensive construction, completed in 2014, it became the Margaret and Charles Juravinski Centre for Integrated Healthcare - an innovative facility designed for mental health and addiction treatment, research and education, combined with medical services."



Century Manor is the last of the hospital's original Victorian era buildings left standing in 2015. Because the hospital was isolated on the mountain it had to provide its own fire brigade shown here in 1909. Hamilton Spectator Archive photo



The massive Barton Building shown here before demolition in 1976 housed 500 patients. Century Manor and Orchard House are behind to the left. HPL local history and archive photo

Mountain Memories, submitted by historian **Robert Williamson** for the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society, generally appears monthly. Admission is free!