



Happy 150th Canada! 1867-2017



Jewish Canadian Involvement



by Rochelle Burns, PhD ©

Yorkville: Before haute couture, there was the original Mount Sinai Hospital.

Unfortunately, anti-Semitism was the propellant to its creation.

Jewish mothers saw how newly minted Jewish doctors were turned away by Toronto hospitals because of their faith.

So, in 1913, the Ezras Noshem Society fundraised for a hospital, spearheaded by such immigrant women as the Mrs. Adler, Cohn, Dworkin, Miller, Spiegel.

Now, with \$12,000, they purchased 100 Yorkville Avenue. In 1923, the "Hebrew Maternity and Convalescent Hospital" opened, with 33 Jewish doctors volunteering some time. In 1924, it became Mount Sinai Hospital. And, in 1953, it opened its new building on University Avenue, only to expand one more time.

When founded, it was the only Canadian hospital to offer kosher food, except for Passover meals carried in by families. In the late 1960s, this writer, as a candy-striper, enabled patients to have kosher l'pesach meals by organizing volunteers to hand deliver special trays of food, three times a day, from the kitchen.

Then, in the 1970s, some Torontonians complained about the hippies and American Viet Nam War draft dodgers who streamed to Yorkville under the noses of the seniors who then lived in the original Mount Sinai building. They tried to get them to complain. "Oh, no," they said. "We love them. They keep us young."

That original property was designated a site of historical significance by the Toronto Historical Board in 1985.

And history-making it was. It showed the gutsiness of the original Jewish founders, enabling the medical miracles of today.

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Mount Sinai Hospital, on Yorkville: photo credit Virtual Reference Library