

Early Days of the Nursing Station

Contributor: Pearle Buckle

Collector: Gertie Fowler

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, today is August 27th, 2009 and I'm here in Buckle's Point with Pearl Buckle and Pearle is going to explain to me today and share some memories with me about her early days of the Nursing Station.

So Pearl would you like to share some memories with me on how you got to start working at the Nursing Station.

Pearle Buckle:

I went to work in April '54, and I worked from '54 until ah...1st of October '55, then I left and got married and I had two children and after Barry went to school in '66, I went back to work again with the IGA and I worked until 1997, I retired.

Gertie Fowler:

So how now, how did you get the go to work over to the hospital?

Pearle Buckle:

Well, Miss Taylor sent a letter over in... at the time Bertha Barney was leaving and she wanted to know if I'd take her place and that. I said I try it....

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Pearle Buckle:

So I tried it and I was there ...

Gertie Fowler:

You liked it.

Pearle Buckle:

...for all the year. I liked the work and ...

Gertie Fowler:

So what kind of work, now, did you do?

Pearle Buckle:

I'd ah... I use to get up in the morning and tend on patients and give them their water to wash and everything like that and make the beds and then every second day... every second evening ah... one of the girls would be out. There was only two of us there, when I went there, Me and Winnie Hancock.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh, okay.

Pearle Buckle:

And ah... every second evening I'd go out and I'd have to she'd have to do the work and she'd have to full in for patients and take their supper trays to them and everything and the next evening, I'd have to do the same. I'd have to make the supper and take the ... and help them to get ready for bed and everything like that. Do bed pans and ...

Gertie Fowler:

So it was only the two of ye?

Pearle Buckle:

It was only the two of us there. Yup.

The only thing that I didn't do, I didn't make no bread.

Gertie Fowler:

No?

Pearle Buckle:

Winnie made all the bread because she always kept (inaudible).

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, maid.

Pearle Buckle:

Every morning, we'd be on the floor, seven o'clock. We had a wood and oil stove. A wood and coal stove rather.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Pearle Buckle:

That's what we ... we use to ... our breakfast morning time, was porridge, we'd make a bowl of porridge... potted porridge in the night and ah... next morning we'd get up and put it out on the front of the stove and hot it and give it around to the patient.

Dinner trays was took home and that. Anyone that could do their own bathing, they'd do it. But we had to be there for ah... assistant hey.

Gertie Fowler:

For anyone that couldn't...

Pearle Buckle:

Anyone that couldn't do it. And I helped to born babies. I didn't count how many babies that I did see born but ah... I seen a good many, there.

Gertie Fowler:

So you use to help ... help Miss Taylor.

Pearle Buckle:

Yeah, help Miss Taylor. We use to stay with the patient until we taught it was time to deliver and then we'd call her night time.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, maid.

Pearle Buckle:

And she'd come down and get ready and that.

I called her one night 'fer Daph Butt ...

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah?

Pearle Buckle:

... and she was a little bit upset and that and she said "No, I'm not coming down" she said, "she's not going to have her baby yet." So I left and I come downstairs and I said "please yourself Miss Taylor, if you don't come down, I done my part." And when she came down, everything was ready for the come.

Gertie Fowler:

That right?

Pearl Buckle:

Hmm.

Gertie Fowler:

So she knew you was....

Pearl Buckle:

She knew then that ... that I knew, you know, a little bit about it and that she could trust me, hey. And I use to do the laundry, do the floors, dusting and everything like that.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, maid. My God Pearl, ah... a lot of difference in then and today.

Pearl Buckle:

Lot of difference. And the last... I got fifteen dollars a month and the last month that I was there in ... in ah... September was me last month, 'cause I went to ... 1st of October I left. They gave me twenty five dollars, 'cause I took charge of the hospital for a month while Miss Taylor was gone on holiday. And at that time I had a ... the only way that I could ah... get the patients... I had three patients then and the only way I could get news to St. Anthony was by radio/telephone, at the time. So I'd call them and tell them, I had a patient. T.J. White was one of them, he fell off a ladder puttin' some paint or something on down to Point Amour.

Gertie Fowler:

Is that right?

Pearle Buckle:

And I called the doctor and told them in St. Anthony and he said "admit him for a few days". I admitted Mr. White for a few days and that and Aunt Belle Davis, L'Anse Amour. The gyproc fell down on her, they had gyproc piled up in the stores or something. She went out and that slided down on her.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, maid.

Pearle Buckle:

And I had to call and tell them about her, so I had her admitted for two or three days.

Gertie Fowler:

So now you had two patients.

Pearle Buckle:

I had two patients and that evening, Mary Hancock, Ed and Mary...

Gertie Fowler:

Yes.

Pearle Buckle:

.... they was expecting their second child and Aunt Mary Dumaresque from L'Anse au Clair, she volunteered that she stay around and help. She was a good midwife. So we went over there on a Sunday evening and we borned Cec Hancock and I started to run back and forth from Uncle Art Hancock's over to the clinic to get things that I needed and that.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, maid.

Pearl Buckle:

But Mary....

Gertie Fowler:

Perfect.

Pearl Buckle:

... had a good delivery and a perfect baby boy.

Gertie Fowler:

Everything went good.

Pearl Buckle:

Everything went good, yeah.

But Aunt Mary took sick after that, and I had to send the rest of the patients, what was there for delivery, had to send them to St. Anthony they wouldn't have any one come in.

Gertie Fowler:

But Pearl, that was a big responsibility for you, then?

Pearl Buckle:

It was a big responsibility.

Gertie Fowler:

You didn't... did you mind back there?

Pearl Buckle:

No I didn't mind it...

Gertie Fowler:

Where you was young?

Pearl Buckle:

Yeah. The only thing that I had to be alert all the time, hey.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah. Yeah.

Pearl Buckle:

So I had the keys of the money box. We had a lot of money over there then, hey?

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Pearle Buckle:

And I had the keys to the money box and that... and 'twas a young man come over here, Mr. Janes, his name was, he was a painter. One evening he was having some visitors come from the Northern Ranger, so he asked me if he could have the keys of the hospital and I said "no" I said, "you can have a key to the doors and that". He said "what about anyone comes" he said "and they needs money changed or anything like that". I said "no, the keys was give to me" I said, and I said "I'm responsible for the money that's in the box."

Gertie Fowler:

That's true.

Pearle Buckle:

But now we did have a little bit of money for to do our own work, where we didn't have to go back to the big box and that. But he did get upset with me and that but I said "well, can't help it". So that... when they paid me the last of September, they gave me \$25, for being so good of a person there and took responsibility.

Gertie Fowler:

So what about drugs and that... did ye have any drugs that you could give...

Pearl Buckle:

Oh, yeah. We had the pill, they'd tell us in St. Anthony what kind of ... the dispensary was there hey?

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Pearl Buckle:

Dr. Thomas, he did come over a couple of evenings on plane and ah... done ... pulled a few teeth and that for people that was desperate and that. And then he put out medication for anyone that needed it, if they'd come for it hey.

Gertie Fowler:

Well, maid, that's perfect.

Pearl Buckle:

Now we never....we didn't give any needles.

Gertie Fowler:

No.

Pearle Buckle:

But we was always... always let... the pills was always put in a little tumbler and a name on it and we could give them in their hours or when needed, hey?

Gertie Fowler:

Okay. So do you have any memories of the clothing store and that Pearl?

Pearle Buckle:

Yes... ah... the clothing store was still there in '54 when I went to work.

Gertie Fowler:

So how did that work now?

Pearle Buckle:

Well you'd take the Your parents would take billets and cut up wood and everything like that and that would go on a slip and you'd take that down and ah... get clothing hey?

Gertie Fowler:

Do you remember what kind of clothing and that it was?

Pearle Buckle:

Yeah. It was dresses and underwear and ah... coats, boots.

Gertie Fowler:

Everything to keep people going?

Pearle Buckle:

Everything to keep people going, yeah.

Gertie Fowler:

So do you see a difference in it today, to what it was back then.

Pearle Buckle:

Yes, big difference. It's a lot of things around that ah... that people I mean, they just... they just go and get it and that's all they need, now the clothing store that went out by the way, and everything like that. And our food that use to come in, in twice a year that come in the spring of the year and in the fall of the year.

Now our eggs would come in ... in ah... water glass ...

Gertie Fowler:

You're talking about the food for the hospital?

Pearle Buckle:

For the hospital, yeah.

Gertie Fowler:

What did you say? Comes in....

Pearle Buckle:

Water glass. Great big container and that's what they called it a water... it was...might... I don't know what was in it to keep the eggs good but water glass.

And we use to get our bakeapples and that from Red Bay. But we couldn't get too much only what was put on the table to eat, I mean we couldn't have much ah... nice stuff we called it , well unless we went down and robbed a little bit, we use to call it. Like bakeapple jam and things like that and those little tins of sausages and stuff like that.

Gertie Fowler:

What about meats and that, how did you....ah..manage?

Pearle Buckle:

The meats had to come in.... will most of the meats would be frozen and that and then we had, after that we got fridges hey.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh, Okay. Yeah.

Pearle Buckle:

Now first when we use to keep with our back cupboards, and we'd have soup a Friday night, and that would be supper Sunday night, what was left over. That would all go out in the back porch in the cupboards out there, 'cause that was like a ice house out there.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Pearle Buckle:

Yeah. The back porch going in there. And we'd have that Sunday then and we'd warm that Sunday and that. But we didn't have much left over foods. If we did we used it up, you know.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh. Yes.

Pearle Buckle:

Until we got fridges and that.

Gertie Fowler:

So do you remember any time that ah....like someone was sick and they never got out... like was it a ... you know gettin' off the coast to go to St. Anthony or anything.

Pearle Buckle:

Nope. I can't remember, every time that we had a patient to go out we always got a plane in hey.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah, so....

Pearle Buckle:

...or the plane came when they had their own plane there... they use to come over after and that...

Gertie Fowler:

So they say God takes care of everything.

Pearle Buckle:

Yeah. Yes God takes cares of everything.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah. So is there anything else now, you'd like to add to your ah...

Pearle Buckle:

The only thing that I ... I can say after left and went to the Health Center, the new Health Center. I found the closeness was gone from the family.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh. Okay.

Pearle Buckle:

'Cause we was like a family over there and that.

Gertie Fowler:

So what was some of the things now that you use to do?

Pearle Buckle:

Some things...we always had our morning devotion. Miss Taylor always had her morning devotion. Twenty to ten to ten o'clock and whoever was in the hospital or the workers, they all had to come and sit in the living room and patients, if they was will enough to come out they came out and sat with us as well.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh. Okay. So she always took time

Pearle Buckle:

She always took time out for her morning devotion. And whoever could do the reading and that, she'd give them a reading every... every day and be a different person every day do the reading.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh. Okay.

Pearle Buckle:

And I can remember another time, Mr. Stan Pike came up. I didn't know Mr. Pike, and ah... but I heard people say that, he use to ah... sniff a lot like hey.

Gertie Fowler:

Sure.

Pearle Buckle:

But that was in his ...

Gertie Fowler:

..older

Pearle Buckle:

..years, hey? And we was having devotion this morning and I heard the door open, so I went out. When I went out it was Mr. Pike that came in but I didn't know him. But when he was talking to me, I took this for granted, you know, that was he.

So I went back to the room, and she asked me. She said "Who is it Pearle?" and I said "I don't know, my dear", I said, "But I think" I said, "it must be must be Mr. Sam Pike from Pinware, 'cause I said he's sniffing a lot". Oh, she got vex with me that day. She said "never say the words any more". I said "I don't mean anything by it but I couldn't describe the man any other way, hey".

Gertie Fowler & Pearle Buckle:

(laughs)

Gertie Fowler:

She never wanted you to say anything bad about anyone, hey.

Pearle Buckle:

Nope, she never wanted you to say anything bad about anyone.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah. So... So overall now, what was your memories...good?

Pearle Buckle:

Oh, we had a lot of good memories with Miss Taylor, yeah. I had a lot of memories that she use to get vex with me but "Jack was so good as his master" and I went on with her.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Pearle Buckle:

Hmmmm

Gertie Folwer:

Alright. So Pearle, I'd like to thank you for your memories. They were beautiful. We'll cherish them forever.

Pearle Buckle:

Thank you.