

1910-1955

Galt Hospital



Hospital complex, 1925. Galt Museum Archives, 19754391000

The population in Lethbridge steadily increased as more people moved into the area after the turn of the 20th century. More hospital beds were required so an addition was constructed to increase the capacity of the 1891 hospital to 65.

Arnold W. Brunner, an American Architect, was hired to design the new wing. Patients moved into the new structure in the spring of 1910 but the grand opening waited until Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Prime Minister of Canada, could attend on September 1st.

Coal miners, Blackfoot people, farmers and ranchers, German Prisoners of War, men, women, and children were cared for in the Galt Hospital by respected doctors like Mewburn, Galbraith, Bigelow, Campbell, Haig and Fowler. Southern Albertans experienced many epidemics in the first half of the 20th Century. Typhoid occurred regularly during the spring runoff. The Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918 and 1919 saw 2578 cases with 129 deaths in this area. Polio affected many people until the Salk vaccine was introduced in the mid 1950s.

By the mid 1940s, the community again needed a larger hospital, and again, plans were made to enlarge the Galt. Studies showed that coal shafts undermined the land where the new hospital was to be built. The substructure would not support the weight of a multi-story building so a site was located for an all new Municipal Hospital on 10 Avenue South between 17 and 19 Streets.

Did you know?

Sunbeam Ward Prior to the early 1920s, children were cared for in adult wards. It wasn't until June 8, 1922 that the Sunbeam Ward was opened for the exclusive use of hospitalized children. Bright sunlight and children's furnishings created a ward where "one feels sure that the sick children must soon regain [their] health." *Lethbridge Herald*, June 8, 1922