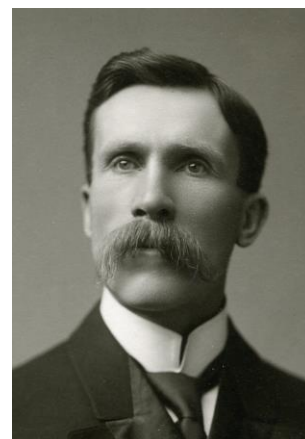
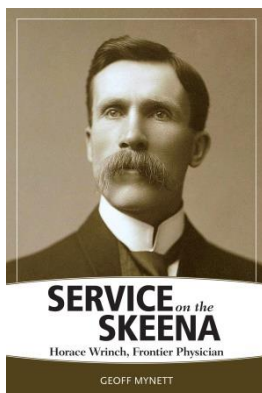


HORACE COOPER WRINCH (1879)

I am indebted to Geoff Mynett for all the information on this OF who went to Canada and had a distinguished career. He had 3 brothers who also attended the College - Walter Godfrey Wrinch (1879-81), Frank Sydney Wrinch (1880-82) and Warwick Wrinch (1882).



Geoff has now written the following book on his life and is married to Alice who is Horace Wrinch's great granddaughter.



Service on the Skeena: Horace Wrinch, Frontier Physician

Summary Information Sheet

- 1866. 6 January. HCW born in Kirby-le-Soken, Essex, England
- 1880. Came to Canada on the Allan line ship, *Sarmation*. His family emigrated later.
- 1884-1885. After several years at a farming school in Richmond, Quebec, joined his family and farmed for almost ten years in Halton County, Ontario.
- 1899. Qualified as a doctor and surgeon at Toronto's Trinity Medical College.
- 1899-1900. House surgeon at St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto.
- 1900. June 16. Married nurse and school teacher, Alice Breckon.
- 1900. July. Traveled to Hazelton, British Columbia as a medical missionary, arriving in September and settling in Kispiox, ten miles up the Skeena.
- 1902. Moved to Hazelton. Acquired land for hospital.

- 1903. Built family home and started construction of the hospital.
- 1904 Opened Hazelton Hospital, becoming Superintendent there until 1936.
- 1904 Started the Hospital farm.
- 1905 Opened the Hazelton Hospital Nurses Training School.
- 1906. Post graduate work in New York's Post Graduate Hospital.
- 1906. Gunanoot affair.
- 1910 Ordained a Methodist minister.
- 1914 Installed power plant and X-Ray machine at the hospital.
- 1918 Helped establish the BC Hospital Association.
- 1923 Alice Wrinch, HCW's wife, died of cancer.
- 1924 Elected to the BC Legislature as a Liberal.
- 1927 First moved public health insurance in the Legislature.
- 1928 Re-elected for his second term in the House.
- 1928 Again pushed for public health legislation in the House.
- 1927 Married May Hogan, matron at the hospital.
- 1933 Did not stand for re-election.
- 1934 Appointed a member of Premier Pattullo's Economic Council.
- 1936 Retires from the Hazelton Hospital.
- 1939 19 October. HCW dies in Vancouver.



Accomplishments

Farmer.

HCW grew up on a farm in Essex, emigrated to Canada at age 14, went to a farming school in Richmond, Quebec and then from 1885 until approximately 1894 he farmed with his brother in Halton County, Ontario. In 1904 he started the Hazelton Hospital farm to feed the hospital community. This farm provided food for the patients at a time when the Skeena River was closed approximately half the year. He became a leader in agricultural improvement in the Bulkley Valley. He was also an enthusiastic gardener, and founded the Hazelton Horticultural Society.

Lay Preacher and Methodist Minister

In approximately 1888 HCW converted from Anglican to Methodism. He became a leader in Methodist affairs in his community and a lay preacher. After his qualification as a doctor, he went to Hazelton and Kispiox as a medical missionary. His mission was medicine, but he also held Bible classes in the hospital and led a life of faith. In 1910, he was ordained as a Methodist Minister and was a leading Methodist in the district.

Doctor and surgeon

He qualified as a doctor with top honours from Trinity Medical College in 1899. He was house surgeon at St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto, 1899-1900. He wrote articles for medical journals. In Hazelton he was a) the local doctor b) the superintendent of the Hazelton Hospital and c) a regional and then a provincial health officer.

Hospital Builder.

He came to Hazelton planning to build a hospital. Although it was originally called a Mission Hospital, it was a hospital for the whole community. He acquired the land, built first his family home and then, in 1904, the hospital. Originally with seventeen beds, it quickly grew to approximately twenty beds. This was the first hospital in the northern interior, from Atlin to the Cariboo and from Port Essington to Edmonton. In 1914, he installed a power plant to provide electricity to the hospital and to power the X-Ray machine, which the first such machine in the north. This hospital was replaced in 1930.

Established and ran Hazelton Hospital Nurses Training School.

In 1905 he started the Nursing Training School to train nurses and to provide staff for the hospital. It lasted until the Depression, when financial pressures led to its closure.

Established and ran Hospital farm.

The farm was necessary because food came up to Hazelton by sternwheeler on a river that was closed to navigation for approximately half the year. With fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, milk and eggs, the hospital might have been the best place in town to eat. During the winter the hospital was well stocked with canned food.

Magistrate.

He was a magistrate in Hazelton for twenty years.

Mining Entrepreneur

Like many others in the community, HCW acquired land and was an investor in mining projects. He was one of the original investors and promoters of the Owen Lake Mines and was President of Harris Mines. How active he was is unknown. (When did he find the time?) But at Owen Lake there is still a Wrinch Vein and a Wrinch Creek.

War time community leader.

During the War he was the leader of the local Red Cross and very active in fund-raising.

Helped establish BC Hospital Association.

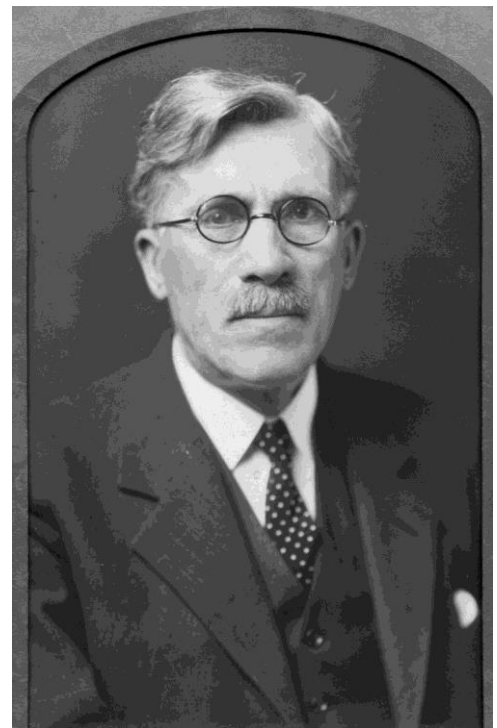
He was one of two B.C. members of the American Hospital Association in 1909. With Malcolm McEachern of Vancouver General Hospital and others, he helped set up the BC Hospital Association, becoming its president for two terms.

Politician.

In 1924 he became the Liberal MLA for the Skeena Riding. He was re-elected in 1928. He was active on many files and became a well-respected relatively non-partisan progressive member. He did not stand for re-election in 1933.

Champion of public health insurance.

Throughout the 1920s HCW was a leading advocate for public health insurance. He moved this in the House in 1927 and 1928, which led to the 1936 Health Insurance Legislation in 1936. Although it became law, it was allowed to lapse because doctors resisted, public enthusiasm waned and the war approached.



Premier Pattullo's Economic Council.

After Liberal Duff Pattullo was elected as premier in 1933, he set up an Economic Council, called Pattullo's Brain Trust (based on Roosevelt's Brain Trust). He appointed HCW as one of its six members.

Quotes about and by HCW, and from the book

HCW speaking on public health insurance legislation in the House in 1927.

Mr. Speaker, the necessity of health legislation is a matter of vital importance for the people of this province. . . . In discussing the idea with sensible people, I have failed to hear one cogent argument advanced against the project.

Per the Victoria's *Daily Colonist*

On his death, the Omineca Herald said:

He was never tired of well-doing. Dr. Wrinch was probably the most influential man and the best liked man that ever blessed the district with his presence. He won the love of his fellow citizens by his service, his kindness and his outstanding ability as a leader, administrator and as a real friend in time of need. The district profited greatly from his life spent here and no monument to his memory is needed so long as the youngest resident remains. . . . Dr. Wrinch was appreciated by the people as was proven by their loyalty to him over the years. He never made an appeal that was not heartily responded to. He was given every position of trust and honour in the gift of the people.

Of him by a First Nations elder.

He treated us like people.

Of the First Nations Character

My own opinion, if I may express it, is that the Indian character does not differ so much from that of the noble Anglo-Saxon as much as some would like to believe. And wherein it does differ, we may sometimes have to look to our laurels that we do not appear in second place.

Letter of February 3, 1912, to Rev. A.C. Farrell at the Missions Board in Toronto.

Of him as a politician

The discursive debate was continued in the afternoon by Dr. Wrinch of Skeena. He is a broad-shouldered upstanding, spectacled man, Wrinch of Skeena. He brings to the House something of the authoritative style, the poise, the human understanding, the sympathy and patience of his profession. He brings with him a suggestion of the North country, where he is physician in ordinary to a far-scattered community. Tales are current in this House which do honor to the service rendered by Dr. Wrinch to the ailing humanity of that northern country. He is a serious-minded man, but there is a touch of quiet humour in him too, and there is no member who commands a greater respect among his fellow members of this House. These qualities of his were conspicuous in his quiet, grave speech today. He had a good word for the ministers of agriculture and finance. He had a friendly if dissenting word for his friends of the opposition. He left the impression, as he always does after his infrequent interventions in debate, that if the riding of Skeena can ill afford to lose his medical services during the term of the session, the House and the country benefits by his presence in the legislature.

The *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 1924 ,

From the Biography

On Building the Hospital

The year 1902 was pivotal. In January, Horace was living in Kispiox, with various possible sites for the hospital in mind but none in hand. He was without firm plans or designs for the buildings, without the money to build home or hospital, without nursing staff and without the authorization from the Methodist Missions Board in Toronto to proceed. By the end of the year he was living in Hazelton, and he had a site, a nurse, money and approvals. The key decisions were all made in this single year. All that remained was to execute the plans, something he had to do in his spare time. He spent 1902 doing the preparatory work. The following year, 1903, he would start to build.

Last paragraph of the book

His belief in God gave him the inspiration; his practicality, born from his farming, gave him the tools. His sense of public service to the community was profound. His values may not always have been shared by

others, but his motivation was worthy, his execution efficient and his results beneficent. His contribution to the welfare of the peoples of the Skeena River and the Province of British Columbia endures.

Please visit my website for further information. (www.geoffmynett.com).