

# MEDICAL ATTENTION

**Langley did not have a hospital in the 1920s, and access to medical care was much different than today.**

For serious medical attention, one would travel to Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster. At the turn of the century, Langley patients took a trail that followed today's Glover Road to the Fraser River, then went by boat. By 1920, there were better travel alternatives, and by this year, for the first time, Langley had two doctors. Dr. Benjamin Marr had served the community since 1910, but left to serve overseas. Dr. Albert McBurney had taken over Dr. Marr's Fort Langley practice during his absence. Upon Marr's return in 1919, Dr. McBurney set up at Langley Prairie, and the two continued to serve the entire municipality. While they would see patients in their practice, house calls were very common. Automobiles were important to these early doctors, who had previously travelled the community by horse and buggy.

During the 1920s, midwives and practical nurses were an important part of the social fabric. Some ran hospitals out of their homes, where babies could be delivered and people could be nursed back to health. The first "hospital" to offer medical services in Langley was Louisa Thompson Craig's maternity hospital, serving all of south Langley and south Surrey from 1907 to 1922. Mrs. Craig's son, Bob Thompson, later recalled that Louisa taught Dr. Marr how to deliver a child.



(Above) Nurse Livingstone holding baby Patricia Collins on the porch of her hospital home, and (left) Mrs. Collins with her newborn on the same porch, 1924.



(Above) Nurse Livingstone's Hospital, as it appeared in the 1960s, and in 2013 (right).



***"Nurse Ellen Monahan would put a pot of onions on the stove, bring them to a boil, and make a poultice of them to put on the patient's chest."***

**-Benny Anderson, Langley resident**

Other women followed, providing care for the sick, injured, and expecting. Nurse Eustatia Livingstone and her husband Frank constructed the first purpose-built hospital in 1912 on the west side of Livingstone Road (232nd Street). The house was finished with wooden lath, horsehair plaster, wide hallways built specifically for stretchers, and was the first home in the Fraser Valley to have running water and an indoor bathroom. It closed in 1931.

Mrs. Jane Frances Spears began running her maternity hospital on the Otter Road (248th Street) in 1921. Her husband passed away in 1935 but she continued to work until after she remarried Thomas Lancaster in May 1938 at the age of 59. She kept a notebook in which she recorded all births, which is now in the archives of the Langley Centennial Museum.



Murrayville's Monahan residence, ca. 1910s. Ellen Monahan was one of Langley's earliest travelling practical nurses and midwives. In the 1920s she and her husband added a room on to their house to accommodate patients.

Other midwives and practical nurses at this time were Elizabeth Moore of Langley Prairie (1920 - 1930), Emma Trattle (1919 - 1924) of Fort Langley, Eva Berry of Murrayville (1924 - 1948), Mrs. S. A. Cartwright of East Langley (1920 - 1940), and Ellen Monahan of Murrayville (1910s - 1930s). There were likely more. The work of these women was likely downplayed, or even undervalued, during their lifetimes, and many of their obituaries make no mention of their service to the community. But their patients knew their value, and that Langley was extremely fortunate to have many midwives and practical nurses.