



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of Nursing
NURSING.USASK.CA

Nightingale Medicine Chest in Canada



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Did you know...
the College of Nursing, USask has an
historical nursing artifact (medicine
chest) that once belonged to Florence
Nightingale?



...and it has been in Canada for over 100 years!

1. Nightingale Medicine Chest in Canada

OVERVIEW

- ☐ Types of Medicine Chests
- ☐ How Medicine Chests were used?
- ☐ Description of the Chest
- ☐ Professional Photos of the Chest
- ☐ Locations of the chest
- ☐ Value of the chest



Land Acknowledgement

National

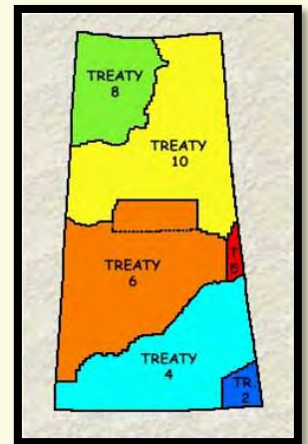
- In Canada, from coast to coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral unceded territories and treaty lands of the First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples who have been displaced with colonization.

Provincial

- We acknowledge in this province, the University of Saskatchewan is on Treaties #2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10 lands.

Local

- In Saskatoon, we are on Treaty #6 land.



Treaty #6 Medicine Chest Clause

- Treaty # 6 signed in 1876 was the most significant treaty in relation to health.
- Treaty #6 contained the 'Medicine Chest Clause'.
- The medicine chest was kept in the home of the Indian Agent for use by, or at the discretion of the Indian Agent.
- Interpretation - health care for all Indigenous people in Canada forever.
- This was a significant benefit until Universal Medicare was established making health care available to all Canadians.



Treaty #6 Medicine Chest Clause

- This simple box style of medicine chest was one type or style of wooden medicine chest from the 1700-1800s
- In this presentation we will discuss other types of Medicine Chests made in that same time-period



Florence Nightingale Medicine Chest in Canada

Types of Ancient Medicine Chests: 1700-1850s



Narrow/wide Box



Cabinet style



Box style

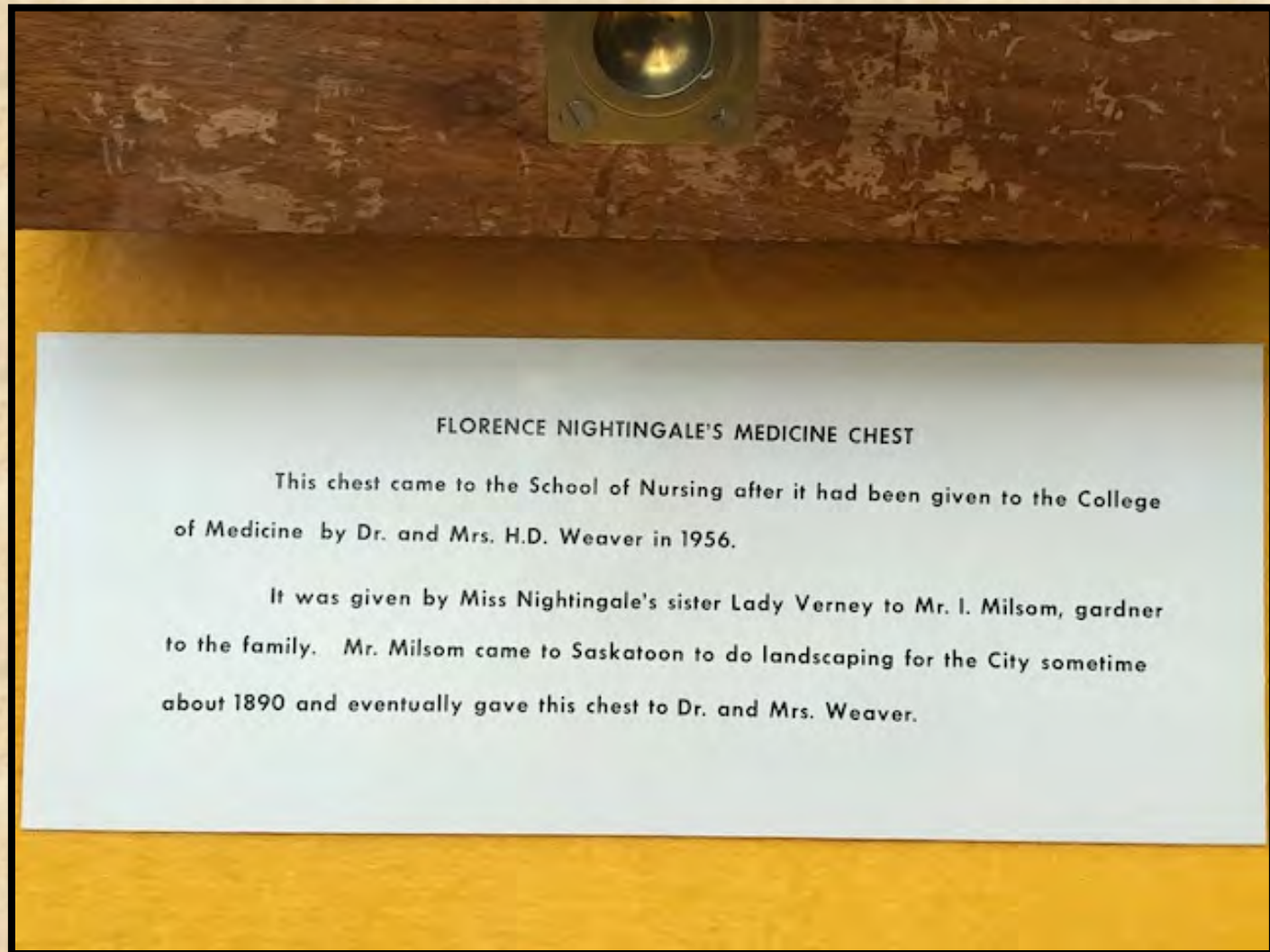
Florence Nightingale Medicine Chest in Canada Display Case Pictures



Located in E-Wing, 4th Floor Health Sciences, CoN

Florence Nightingale Medicine Chest

Original information card in display case with medicine chest



FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE'S MEDICINE CHEST

This chest came to the School of Nursing after it had been given to the College of Medicine by Dr. and Mrs. H.D. Weaver in 1956.

It was given by Miss Nightingale's sister Lady Verney to Mr. I. Milsom, gardner to the family. Mr. Milsom came to Saskatoon to do landscaping for the City sometime about 1890 and eventually gave this chest to Dr. and Mrs. Weaver.

Florence Nightingale Museum (FNM) in London England



Florence Nightingale Museum (FNM), London



This museum celebrates the life, work, and legacy of the best known figure in nursing history - Florence Nightingale, with a collection of over 3000 exhibits



1854-56 Crimean War

- Dating back to 1850's the Nightingale medicine chest is a historical artifact.
- Nightingale purchased the medicine chest(s) in England and in 1854-56, took 38 volunteer nurses to the Crimea, along with the medicine chest(s), for them to use in caring for wounded soldiers.



Medicine Chest (Box)
Florence Nightingale Museum



Medicine Chest once owned by FN
came to Canada in 1912, now located CoN, USask

Medicine Chests: Purpose



- Constructed from wood by highly skilled cabinet makers;
- Made in the 18th & 19th century;
- Fitted out by chemists
- Sold at apothecaries in London, England;
- Often owned by affluent individuals for home or long journeys;
- Used to store medical remedies for common ailments;
- Typically contained opium-based painkillers, laxatives, smelling salts and other herbal tinctures;

What Would Have Been In - the Medicine Chests?



How was it Used?

- Nightingale took medicine chests (like the cabinet style type here in Canada and the medicine chest or box displayed at the Florence Nightingale Museum FNM: 2023h) to the Crimea.
- Most of the medicines in it were for treating gastric complaints, and many were highly toxic if used inappropriately.
- Paregoric Elixir had painkilling properties but was largely used as an anti-diarrhea remedy, while Aromatic Confection was seen as a tonic that could also purge the system of trapped wind. Essence of Ginger, Citric Acid, Powdered Rhubarb and Carbonate of Magnesia and Soda were used to relieve flatulence and spasms of the stomach and bowels.
- The Medicine Chest also carried quinine for malaria, and Carbonate of Potassium for fever.
- The chest at the FNM also has a tiny set of scales and measures, and a beaker for measuring liquids (Preston, 2020; FNM, 2023h).

What Nightingale medicine chest(s) were used for?

Medicine Box at



Florence Nightingale Museum in London, England

Medicine Chest (Box). Florence took this (small 6"X5"X4") medicine chest (box) to the Crimean War for her and her nurses to use if needed. Most of the medicines are for upset stomach and diarrhea, showing Florence's foresight. It included quinine for malaria, ipecacuania wine used for dysentery or coughs and carbon of potassium for fever. Aromatic confection was a tonic and was also used to purge the system of blocked wind. Paregoric elixir has painkilling properties but was largely used as an anti-diarrhea remedy. Essence of ginger, citric acid, powdered rhubarb, carbonate of magnesia, and soda were to relieve flatulence, and spasms of the stomach and bowels. The medicine chest also contains two containers of pills labelled "tonic pills" and "cough pills", a tiny set of scales and measures, and a glass beaker for measuring liquids. Much of the contents of the chest are highly toxic (Florence Nightingale Museum [FNM]: 0694 and 0596.

Small Medicine Chest (box) approximate size 6"X5"X4". FNM: 0694 and 0596

Florence Nightingale Medicine Chest in Canada

Size: 12"h, x16"w, x8"d

Description:

The medicine chest is made of dark brown wood, possibly mahogany. FRONT CABINET: There are double opening front cabinet doors. On the inside of each door are six partitions or cubicles with six more partitions across the top of the back wall within the open chest; each individual cubicle is lined with green baize. DRAWER: There is one single drawer spanning the width of the chest beneath the double doors. BACK: At the back of the medicine chest is a secret compartment that opens by a sliding wood panel; inside of which could have been concealed the dangerous drugs and poisons of the day! HARDWARE: The original key is still there to the lock system for the cabinet doors and the drawer; there is also a metal latch lever to close the left cabinet door. TOP: The top of the chest has a metal handle and a plaque has been added, stating the chest was presented to the College of Medicine by Dr., & Mrs. H. D. Weaver. BOTTOM: The bottom of chest is completely covered in green baize; no markings as to the year or make is visible. CONDITION: The medicine chest is only in fair condition, as it appears to have been well-used in its time.





Photos and Description

Nightingale Medicine Chest in Canada



Nightingale Medicine Chest in Canada

(12"h x 16"w x 8"d)



Nightingale Medicine Chest, c. 2022
Professional Photos by David Stobbe, Commissioned by College of Nursing, 2022

Front - Open Chest



Front - Closed Chest



Back - Closed Chest



Back - Closed Chest



Back - Secret Compartment



Table Base - Over drawer



Damage noted to table base of cabinet over the drawer
Appears to have been well used in its time. Looks as if there are stains on the green baize due to past liquid spill.

Table Base - Over drawer



This well-worn appearance may provide some credibility or evidence of the medicine chest allegedly was taken to the Crimea by Nightingale because it was well-used at one time? If it was in pristine condition - it would not

Hardware - Lock & Key Repaired



Hardware - Lock & Key Repaired



Hardware - Lock & Key Repaired



Hardware - Lock & Key Repaired



Bottom - Green Baize



Bottom - Green Baize



Drawer - Under



Drawer - Under



Drawer - Bottom - Signature?



Drawer - Signature?



Top: Handle and Plaque

Presented by Dr and Mrs H. D. Weaver
Saskatoon



Locations of the Nightingale Medicine Chest in Canada at the University of Saskatchewan



1956-Location of the Medicine Chest

1956 Murray Memorial Library, Murray Building:

- For many years the Florence Nightingale Medicine Chest was displayed on the ground floor, Saskatchewan Archives of the Murray Memorial Library.
- The Murray Memorial Library on the University of Saskatchewan campus in Saskatoon shortly after it opened in 1956. The offices of the Saskatchewan Archives were located on the ground floor until around 2004



(SK Archives Photo, Photographic Services series, 56-626-03)

Locations of the Medicine Chest

...at University of Saskatchewan



1956 Murray Building opened
Murray Memorial Library
Ground Floor - SK Archives



1974 Display Plexiglass Case
built and chest place in Health
Sciences Library, B-Wing



2012 Nightingale Medicine Chest
moved to A Wing College of
Nursing Admin Offices while
Library was renovated



2013 New E-Wing opened.
Medicine Chest placed in Dube
Health Science Library



2015 Nightingale Medicine
Chest moved to 4th Floor
E-wing



Future: Plans for Nightingale
Medicine Chest to be moved to
A-Wing Corridor for visibility

Nightingale Medicine Chest in Canada



Current Location
5-foot Display Case
E-Wing, 4th Floor Health Sc



Future Location
Wall Alcove - Display case
A-Wing Health Sc

QR CODE



To learn more:

- (1) Nightingale Medicine Chest: Description, Types, Value
- (2) Nightingale, Florence: Life & Legacy
- (3) Nightingale Medicine Chest: Custodians in Canada
(prominent citizens in early Saskatchewan history).
- (4) Nightingale Medicine Chest: Research (SSHRC funded)
- (5) Nightingale Medicine Chest: Future Plans

Select on this QR Code which links to the College of Nursing webpage: About Historical Florence Nightingale Medicine Chest

<https://nursing.usask.ca/about/florence-nightingale-medicine-chest.php>

References

Florence Nightingale Museum. (2023h). *Medicine chest* [Display No. 28]. Exhibits from 'Florence the woman', Florence Nightingale 200 years. <https://www.florence-nightingale.co.uk/medicine-chest/>

Preston, A. (2020, May 9). *The lady with the wrong lamp. Marking the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale*. Daily Mail. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-8289069/Marking-200th-anniversary-Florence-Nightingales-birth-life-fascinating-objects.html>



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THANK-YOU

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