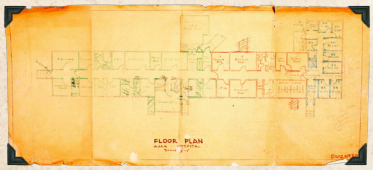
HISTORY OF
AJAX PICKERING HOSPITAL

The community was excited about the new hospital, and the local newspaper kept residents updated leading up to the official opening on February 23rd, 1954.

The Ajax and Pickering General Hospital, c1963.



The original hand drawn room plan of the "Ajax Hospital" showing the layout of the one floor building.

In 1941, a hospital was opened as part of the Defence Industries Limited (DIL) operations that was a munitions plant supporting the war effort and based in Ajax. That building was located at the corner of Kings Crescent and Exeter Road, and was set up to care for the DIL employees as well as in case of an emergency on site caused by an explosion or accident. Four years later, with the conclusion of World War II and the closure of DIL, the hospital also closed.

But by 1950, residents of Ajax and Pickering – who were having to travel to Oshawa or Toronto for health care (and on roads decades before the Hwy 401 was even built) – were demanding a hospital in their own community. In 1951, letters patent were granted for the Ajax General Hospital (they were amended in 1958 to read "Ajax and Pickering General Hospital").

It was decided that this new hospital would incorporate the original DIL hospital frame building, which had stood empty and unused since 1949. All that had to happen was the building be moved from its first location to the current site!

On February 23rd, 1954, the Ajax and Pickering General Hospital was officially opened on Harwood Avenue South. Premier Leslie Frost officiated the ceremony, assisted by Dr. F.G. Robertson, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health and Welfare.

Sources: "A Town Called Ajax" - Edited by Archie MacDonald – Published for The Ajax Historical Board ©1995 | "History of the Ajax and Pickering General Hospital Most Interesting" - November 19, 1964 – Ajax Advertiser

Province of Ontario

By the Honourable

Provincial Secretary

To all to whom these Presents shall Come

Greeting

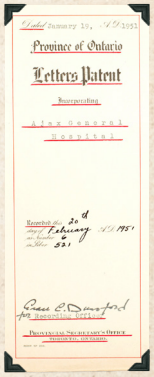
Wherreas

And Wherreas

And Wherreas

Now Therefore Know Ye

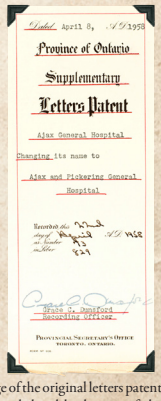
The front page of the original letters patent issued in 1951, with the official ribbon & seal in place.



Province of Ontario

Letters Patent

Ajax General Hospital



Province of Ontario

Supplementary

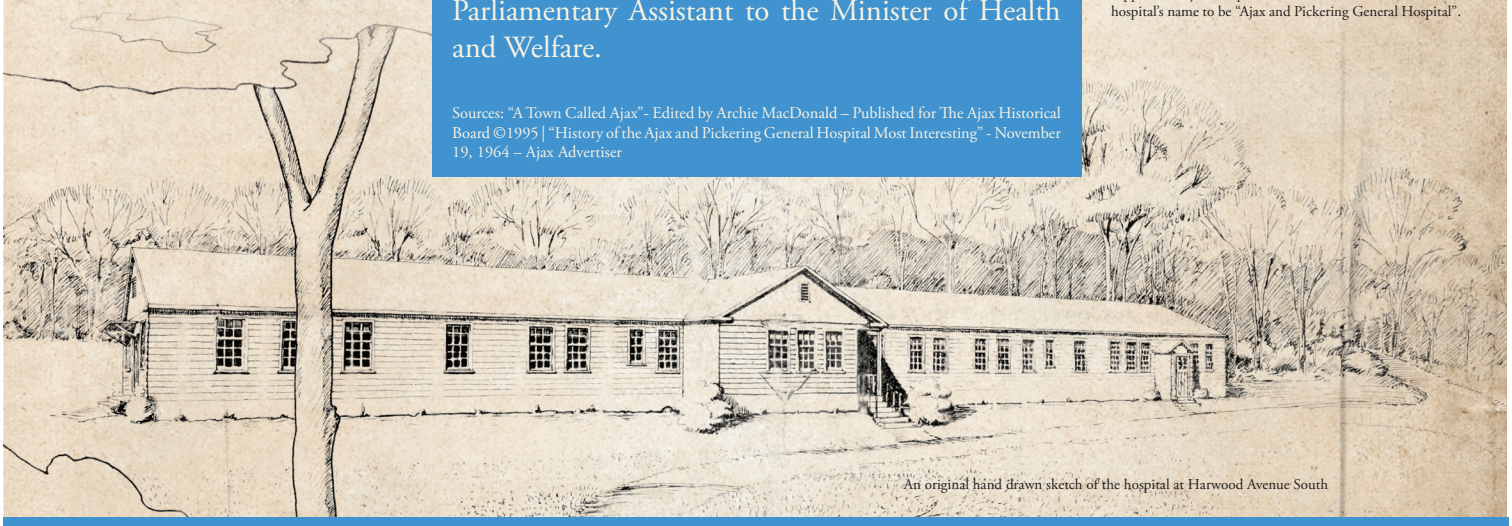
Letters Patent

Ajax General Hospital

Changing its name to

Ajax and Pickering General Hospital

(L) The signed and dated back page of the original letters patent issued in 1951. (R) The signed and dated back page of the supplementary letters patent issued in 1958 that amended the hospital's name to be "Ajax and Pickering General Hospital".



An original hand drawn sketch of the hospital at Harwood Avenue South

1954

Ajax Pickering Hospital Foundation

HISTORY OF
AJAX PICKERING HOSPITAL

When the provisional directors first met in 1951, the hospital's bank balance was $487.85. One of their first tasks was to begin a fundraising campaign to raise the necessary $25,000.

Inconceivable in today's day and age since OHIP was introduced in 1959, people were even offered a free chest x-ray if a Women's Institute representative was able to visit them to talk about the development and establishment of the hospital.

Within a year, $24,000 had been raised through grants and generous donations.

When the Ajax and Pickering General Hospital (as it was then known) opened in 1954, constructing and equipping the hospital cost only $210,396, the building had a floor area of just 8,000 square feet and was staffed with just eight nurses!

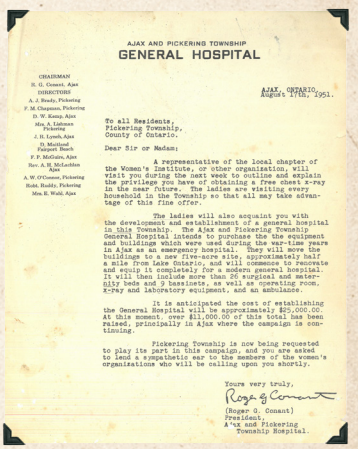
The hospital, though, had 38 beds, 12 bassinets, a fully-equipped operating room, x-ray and surgical equipment, a maternity ward as well as kitchens & staff rooms.

In its first year, the hospital admitted 1,079 patients, welcomed 245 babies and performed 238 surgeries.

In comparison, when you jump forward 65 years, the Ajax Pickering Hospital had 9,945 admitted patients, over 62,000 visits to the Emergency Department, performed 11,689 surgeries and brought into the world 1,514 babies.

Sources: "A Town Called Ajax"- Edited by Archie MacDonald – Published for The Ajax Historical Board ©1995 | "History of the Ajax and Pickering General Hospital Most Interesting" - November 19, 1964 – Ajax Advertiser

Pages from the fundraising booklet illustrating and explaining what the $25,000 would fund in the new hospital.



AJAX AND PICKERING TOWNSHIP
GENERAL HOSPITAL

CHAIRMAN
R. G. Conant, Ajax
DIRECTORS
A. J. Ready, Pickering
F. M. Chapman, Pickering
D. W. Kemp, Ajax
Mrs. A. Lishman
Pickering
J. B. Lynch, Ajax
D. Maitland
Fairport Beach
F. P. McGuire, Ajax
Rev. A. M. McLachlan
Ajax
A. W. O'Connor, Pickering
Hon. Ready, Pickering
Mrs. E. Wahl, Ajax

AJAX, ONTARIO,
August 17th, 1951.

To all Residents,
Pickering Township,
County of Ontario.

Dear Sir or Madam:

A representative of the local chapter of the Women's Institute, or other organization, will visit you during the next week to outline and explain the privileges you have of obtaining a free chest x-ray in the near future. The ladies are visiting every household in the Township so that all may take advantage of this fine offer.

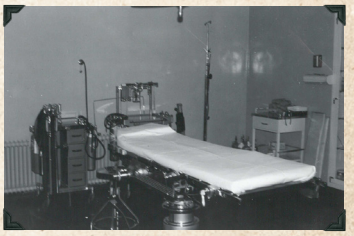
The ladies will also acquaint you with the development and establishment of a general hospital in this Township. The Ajax and Pickering Township General Hospital intends to purchase the the equipment and buildings which were used during the war-time years in Ajax as an emergency hospital. They will move the buildings to a new five-acre site, approximately half a mile from Lake Ontario, and will commence to renovate and equip it completely for a modern general hospital. It will then include more than 26 surgical and maternity beds and 9 bassinets, as well as operating room, x-ray and laboratory equipment, and an ambulance.

It is anticipated the cost of establishing the General Hospital will be approximately $25,000.00. At this moment, over $11,000.00 of this total has been raised, principally in Ajax where the campaign is continuing.

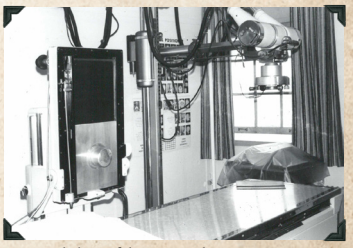
Pickering Township is now being requested to play its part in this campaign, and you are asked to lend a sympathetic ear to the members of the women's organizations who will be calling upon you shortly.

Yours very truly,
Roger G. Conant
(Roger G. Conant)
President,
A'ax and Pickering
Township Hospital.

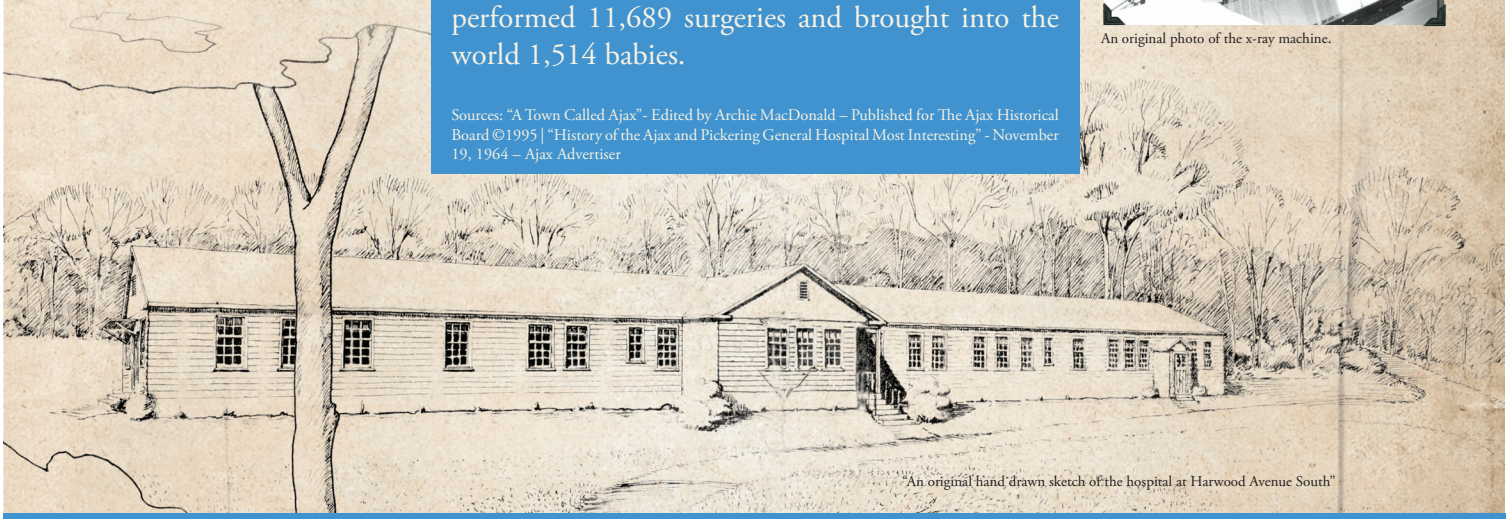
A fundraising letter that was sent to Pickering residents asking them to support the hospital fundraising efforts.



An original photo of the operating room.



An original photo of the x-ray machine.



"An original hand drawn sketch of the hospital at Harwood Avenue South"

1954

Ajax Pickering Hospital Foundation