

BLUBBER BAY HOSPITAL

The museum's recent acquisition of a wood-framed notice from 1930 titled "Blubber Bay Hospital Association- Bylaws" has renewed interest in the extent of medical facilities available at that time in Pacific Lime's company town.

By 1907 Van Anda's hospital, once the opera house, had been transferred to the Columbia Coast Mission who operated the hospital for a few more years.

In faraway Blubber Bay, however, isolated by sea and a rough overland trail, the Company had no choice but to take care of its townspeople.

The Pacific Lime Company had provided living quarters and one "surgery room" for a doctor to administer first aid when accidents happened at the quarry.

To improve local health services the Blubber Bay Hospital Association was formed in 1923. The executive consisted of the Company superintendent and 6 other members.

For monthly dues of \$1.50 (deducted from wages) members were entitled to "first aid, hospital accommodation, doctor services and supplies and, if necessary, transport to a hospital where proper treatment can be received."

All Pacific Lime employees were eligible to join "excepting Indians who will not be eligible for membership." The notice also advised that "the liability of the Association will not extend to Venereal, Alcoholic or Narcotic addicts."

A house at the end of the first (of two) rows was reserved for the succession of doctors who practiced there: Dr Sutherland, Dr Terry, Dr Loughheed and finally Dr Schwalm who tended his garden roses into the 1950's.

A major fund raiser for the Hospital Association was, reportedly, the annual "smoker" held in the schoolhouse (not suitable for ladies, presumably).

There were drawbacks to company control, however. During the 1938 strike all company buildings including the medical office were declared off-limits to striking employees.

Through later years the declining population in Blubber Bay as well as easier access to Powell River facilities brought an end to the need for local medical services and the Blubber Bay Hospital Association was dissolved.

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