



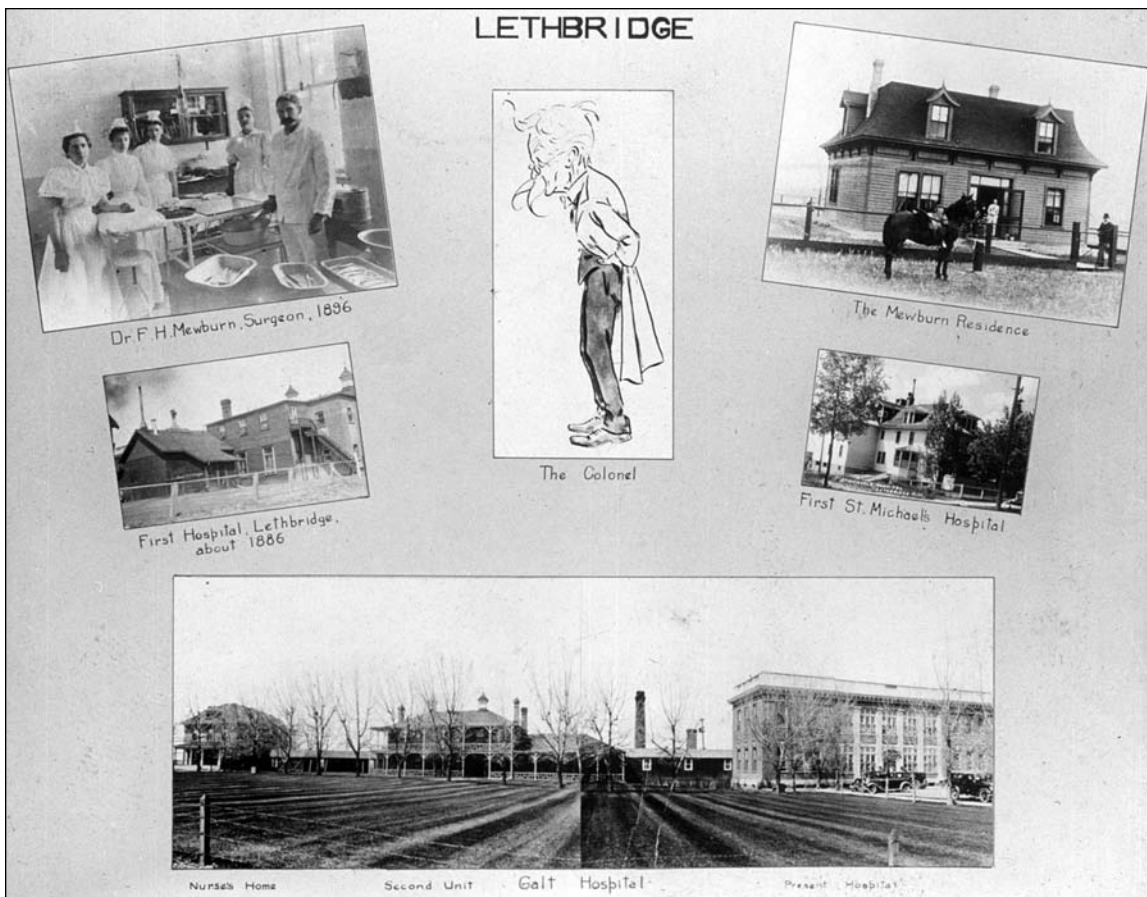
9-1

**FRANK HAMILTON MEWBURN, OBE, MD, FACS
1858 – 1929**



Mewburn Family
Medical Certificates
1765-1809
from Jamieson's
Early Medicine in Alberta

9-2



Lethbridge
Hospitals
1886-1910
from Jamieson's
Early Medicine
in Alberta

9-3

FRANK HAMILTON MEWBURN, OBE, MD, FACS 1858 – 1929

*“His was a personality that a student encounters rarely ...
None ... could fail to be influenced by the joyous way
that he went into battle for his patient ...
he was ... completely patient-centered ...
He was first, last and always the doctor.”⁽¹⁾*

Introduction

Frank Hamilton Mewburn arrived in Winnipeg in March 1882, just in time to play a significant part in the most eventful era in Surgery. No one who came and stayed, did more to lead the advance of surgery in Western Canada than this diminutive, McGill trained, self-taught surgeon.

The west was changing quickly in 1882. The CPR had arrived on the prairies, starting construction from Winnipeg (1881), before reaching Regina (1882), Calgary (1883), and Craigallachie (1885). The Manitoba Medical College began in 1883 and was the first and only MD granting western medical college for the next thirty-eight years. The 1872 built Winnipeg Cottage Hospital was moved and enlarged to become the seventy-two bed Winnipeg General Hospital (WGH) in 1884. The forty-seven day

Northwest Rebellion in 1885 brought 5800 soldiers and forty-three physicians to the NWT battlefields and hospitals. The first scheduled transcontinental trains started in June 1886.

With the promise of peace following the Northwest Rebellion came the first wave of immigration to the “free lands”. Following in lock-step were the pioneering practitioners, druggists, pharmacies, hospitals and OR's. With them came improved sanitation measures and expectations that eastern metropolitan standards of medical care would be imported into the west.

The 1880's also saw the dawn of intra-abdominal surgery in the western medical world.⁽²⁾ Dr. Mewburn evolved with it, as it became a specialty within medicine. He was a pioneer in the Mackid tradition.⁽³⁾

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1. Rawlinson, H.E. “Frank Hamilton Mewburn”, *Canadian Journal of Surgery* 2:1-5, October 1958. The Mewburn profile was included in *Five Celebrated Early Surgeons of Southern Alberta*, by R. Lampard. Published by the Lethbridge Historical Society as Occasional Paper #43, in May 2006.
 2. Bishop, W.J. *The Early History of Surgery*, pages 172-181, Robert Hale 1960.
In 1880 Spencer Wells published his series 1858-1880 of 1000 ovariectomies (a complete or wedge resection of the ovary). It was the largest series of intra-abdominal operations to that date. It was followed by the first cholecystectomy (1882), and the first successful ectopic pregnancy operation by Lawson Tait (1883). By 1882, Willard Parker had performed eighty operations to remove perityphlic (periappendicular) abscesses from 1867-1882. These cases were thought to arise from a rare disease called a perforated appendix (1884) as confirmed at postmortem. The term “appendicitis” and the dangers of perforation, were not described until 1885 by R.H. Fitz of Boston. Early surgery for appendicitis was not recommended until 1886 by H.B. Sands. The first planned appendectomy for appendicitis, was performed by McBurney in 1889, in which he described McBurney's point of abdominal sensitivity over the appendix. McBurney's abdominal muscle splitting procedure to reduce postoperative hernias was not detailed until 1894.
Early Prairie Surgery has been addressed in:
1) Manitoba: I. Carr and R.E. Beamish's *Manitoba Medicine – a Brief History*, pages 23-34, UofM Press, 1999; and N.T. McPhedran's “The Development of Surgery in Western Canada” in the *Prairie Medical Journal* 67(1): 55-59, Spring 1997.
2) Saskatchewan: Stuart Houston's “Early Saskatchewan Hospitals”, *Annals of the RCPSC* 23: 265-270, 1990 and “Dr. M.M. Seymour”, *Annals of the RCPSC* 31(1): 41-43, February 1998; Joan Feather's “Hospitals in Saskatchewan in Territorial Days in Saskatchewan History” 40(2): 62-71, Spring 1987; and “L.H. Thomas' Early Territorial Hospitals”, *Saskatchewan History* 2(2):16-20, Spring 1949.
3) Alberta: H.C. Jamieson's *Early Medicine in Alberta*, pages 17-37 (NWMP and CPR eras), 88-100 (Hospitals), AMA 1947; and Janet Ross-Kerr's *Prepared to Care*, pages 17-20, UofA 1998.
 3. Mackid, H.G. “The Presidents Address” at the Annual Meeting of the Association at Edmonton August 10, 1912. *CMAJ* 2(9): 801-811, September 1912. Dr. Mackid concluded his speech with the rhetorical question, “What is the value of the West to Medicine?” and provided the answer, “Does not the answer lie in the words, energy and newness and opportunity”.

In 1886 Dr. Mewburn headed west from Winnipeg to the end of the “Turkey Trail” at Coal Banks, now Lethbridge.⁽⁴⁾ There he met his intellectual and medical soul mate, Dr. George A. Kennedy.⁽⁵⁾ The knowledge and experience of these two pioneers, coupled with their operative skills and astute diagnostic decision-making, led to a remarkable string of surgical and medical accomplishments.

In retrospect the citizenry of Lethbridge and Fort Macleod must have marveled at their good fortune, to have these doctors come and remain in their communities. In true frontier tradition, both Drs. Mewburn and Kennedy answered many calls from their fledgling communities, to contribute beyond their daily medical practices and on-call schedules.⁽⁶⁾

As Mewburn's surgical reputation grew, his referral radius widened. Financially secure with a 1913 charter Fellowship from the American College of Surgeons in hand, he moved to Calgary and polarized his practice to surgery on a full-time basis. One year later the call of patriotism and the challenges of wartime surgery beckoned. Mewburn had already had a taste of it during the Northwest Rebellion.

Deemed over age (55), Mewburn was refused enlistment. Not dissuaded, in 1915 he went to England at his own expense and joined the Canadian Army Medical Corps (CAMC). He was promoted to the Head of Surgery at the Canadian General Hospital #15 at Taplow.

Two years after his 1919 demobilization, the new UofA Dean of Medicine, Dr. A.C. Rankin, approached Mewburn, over Dr. Edgar W. Allin and John S. McEachern, to become the first full-time Professor and Head of Surgery at the UofA. His appointment was one of the conditions of the 1920 Rockefeller Grant to the UofA.

Driven by impetuosity, surgical audacity, and a streak of rugged independence, Mewburn's string of prairie surgical firsts was unrivaled. But it was his love of teaching and the respect he received from his students, that became his most lasting mark on medicine in Alberta. In 1929 his surgical career was short-

ened when he died while still in harness. It brought to a halt Mewburn's desire to record the highlights, experiences, events and friendships that he regretted had not been undertaken sooner.⁽⁷⁾

As a Youth, 1858-1875

Frank Hamilton Mewburn was born on March 5, 1858, the youngest of seven children, in Drummondville, Ontario, which is now part of Niagara Falls. He grew up to be a skinny, pigeon breasted, five foot six inch, 140 pound, cherubic, physically frail student. To increase his presence, Mewburn grew a “walrus” moustache. His full head of hair complemented his great personal charm.

When Mewburn decided to enter medical school circa 1875, he became the fourth of an eventual seven-generation physician dynasty that exceeded two hundred consecutive years of medical service. The first, his great-grandfather Dr. Francis Mewburn, commenced his medical studies by apprenticing under Thomas Hornby in 1765. His grandfather, Dr. John Mewburn earned a membership in the Royal College of Surgeons (MRCS) and was honorably mentioned by Sir Astley Cooper. In 1832 John Mewburn chose to come to Canada. His father, Dr. Francis Clarke Mewburn, apprenticed with his grandfather in Weston near Toronto, before moving to Niagara Falls. Francis Mewburn was awarded an



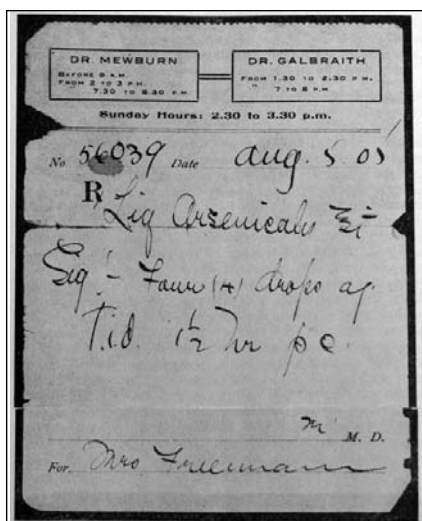
F.H. Mewburn (surgeon), L.G. deVeber (anesthetist), 9-4 W.S. Galbraith (watching), and two OR nurses, Lethbridge, circa 1891

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4. Higinbotham, John D. *When the West Was Young*, pages 156-174, Ryerson Press, 1933. Privately reprinted by Bruce Haig in 1978. Also see A.L.S. Peat's "19th Century Lethbridge", Occasional Paper #8, pages 37, 40, Lethbridge Historical Society 1978.
5. Lampard, Robert Profile of "Dr. G.A. Kennedy".
6. den Otter, A.A. "Urban Pioneers of Lethbridge", Alberta History 25 (1): 15-24, Winter 1977.
7. Mewburn, Frank H. "The Life and Work of Dr. George Kennedy", CMAJ 21: 327-330, 1929.

honorary Doctorate in Medicine by the University of Buffalo.⁽⁸⁾

Medical School 1875-1882

No sooner had Dr. Mewburn commenced his medical studies at McGill, than another wonderful event happened. In 1875 four trained nurses from St. Thomas Hospital in London, England, arrived at the Montreal General Hospital. Until then nursing was done by “handy” women.⁽⁹⁾ The importance of nurses to medicine, and the importance of nurses in the eyes of Dr. Mewburn, would resurface in 1923, when Dr. Mewburn and two other physicians restarted the three-year



Mewburn prescription for liquid Arsenic, 1905

and five year Nursing Degree programs at the UofA.⁽¹⁰⁾

While still a student at McGill Dr. Mewburn saw his first ovariectomy or removal of the ovaries. It must have excited him and provided an early stimulus for his career in surgery. Mewburn

became an early disciple of the Lister carbolic fog technique, no doubt introduced to it at McGill by his professor of surgery Dr. Thomas Roddick, who had visited Lord Lister in 1875.⁽¹¹⁾ The value of Lister antiseptics was likely reaffirmed by his experiences treating the injured who came to the Winnipeg General Hospital during the CPR railway construction period (1882)⁽¹²⁾, and three years later by the same Dr. Thomas Roddick, who was appointed the Deputy Surgeon General and senior Field Surgeon during the 1885 NW Rebellion.⁽¹³⁾

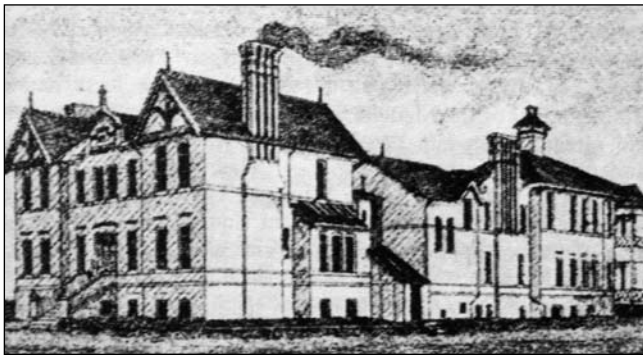
Winnipeg General Hospital (WGH) and the North West Rebellion 1882-1885

After graduating in 1881, Dr. Mewburn interned for a year at the Montreal General Hospital with Drs. John A. Macdonald, James Bell and Andrew Henderson.⁽¹⁴⁾ The next year he moved to the booming town of Winnipeg. In March 1882 he was appointed the WGH's House Surgeon, a role that was expanded in 1884 to the Chief Resident Officer, with general charge of the fourteen or more staff and the seventy-two beds. He could not practice, only consult. While Dr. Mewburn could admit emergencies, most of his time was spent attending the patients of the staff physicians.⁽¹⁵⁾ Although the Manitoba Medical College opened in Winnipeg in November 1883, Dr. Mewburn was not one of the thirteen charter members, founders or instructors.

8. Jamieson, Heber C. *Early Doctors in Southern Alberta*, CMAJ 38: 391-397, 1938. For more on the Mewburns see G.D. Stanley's "Medical Pioneering in Alberta" CACHB 1(3): 8, November 1936 and H.C. Jamieson's *Early Medicine in Alberta*, pages 24-25, AMA 1947. For a more detailed account of the family see W. Canniff's *The Medical Profession in Upper Canada*, pages 111, 511-515, 518, 1894, reprinted by Associated Medical Services (Hannah) in 1980; H.E. MacDermot's *History of the Canadian Medical Association Volume I: 135-136*, CMA; and H.E. Rawlinson's "Frank Hamilton Mewburn *Canadian Journal of Surgery* 2: 1-5, October 1958. Nine Mewburn medical certificates, from 1765 to 1860 are held in the University of Alberta Archives in the Jamieson Papers Accession 81-104, 25/1/2 Box 4, #44 and Accession 76-95, #10.
9. Arnold, Hugh A. "Frank Hamilton Mewburn. Pioneer Surgeon of the West". Twelve page paper read to the Fort Whoop Up (Lethbridge) Chapter of the Historical Society of Alberta, April 29, 1975. Published in the Lethbridge Historical Society Newsletter #6, pages 2-4, November 1991.
10. Brighty, Kate "History of Nursing in Alberta 1942". The History of Nursing Questionnaire for the University of Alberta Hospital and School of Nursing, pages 1-2, AARN.
11. MacDermot, H. Ernest *Sir Thomas Roddick*, pages 31-44, Macmillan, 1938. For a more detailed description of its use and Mewburn's acceptance and reflections on it see H.A. Arnold's "Frank Hamilton Mewburn" pages 4-5 and Charles Roland's "The Early Years of Antiseptic Surgery in Canada", pages 237-254 in *Medicine in Canadian Society*, McGill Queens, 1981.
12. Rawlinson, H.E. "Frank Hamilton Mewburn", *Canadian Journal of Surgery* 2: 1-5, October 1958.
13. MacDermot, H. Ernest *Sir Thomas Roddick*, pages 45-83.
14. Rawlinson, H.E. Frank Hamilton Mewburn, page 2. The photo of the four McGill interns was dated 1882. Also referenced in Elizabeth McCrum's "Abstract of the UofA medical holdings," pages 12-13, UofA 1980.
15. Board of Trustees Report of the Secretary-Treasurer from April 1, 1882 to December 31, 1883, Winnipeg General Hospital (WGH); Minutes WGH November 11, 1884 and Edith Patterson's *Tales of Early Manitoba* from the Winnipeg Free Press, pages 89-94, WFP, 1970. Dr. Mewburn succeeded Dr. L.J. Munro who left the WGH and moved to Edmonton because Edmonton had no physicians. Munro practiced in Edmonton until 1886.

In 1885 Dr. Mewburn provided medical care for the patients sent to the new WGH military wing, during and after the forty-seven day North-West Rebellion.⁽¹⁶⁾ When Dr. Roddick closed the Saskatoon base hospital on July 7, 1885, he transferred the last seventeen casualties one thousand miles by barge down the Saskatchewan River and across Lakes Winnipeg and Winnipegosis to the WGH. Dr. James Kerr, the Dean of the Manitoba Medical College (MMC), was responsible for the admission, management and the treatment of the WGH transferred casualties. Dr. Mewburn was responsible for their ward care.⁽¹⁷⁾ Mewburn received the North West Canada Medal for his services.

Dean Kerr was also a surgeon. He performed three operations on the eighty-one soldiers hospitalized at the WGH: an excision of a large hydrocele of the



Winnipeg General Hospital, 1884 9-6

neck that was anatomically in contact with the carotid sheath, an incision and drainage of an empyema, and an incision of a knee joint to extract a bullet.⁽¹⁸⁾ Dr. Mewburn likely assisted him as the Chief Resident Officer. In August 1885 when Dr. Roddick returned to Winnipeg from the East, ten patients remained in the WGH.⁽¹⁹⁾ A few remained until the next spring before being transferred back to Ontario. One was a frozen foot and toe amputee, Roger Pocock.⁽²⁰⁾

The Lethbridge Years 1886-1913

Despite these experiences, Dr. Mewburn became increasingly frustrated by the limited amount of major surgery he was getting at the WGH. Although the hospital had seventy-two beds⁽²¹⁾, Mewburn noted that up to January 1886 when he left, there had been only two or three abdominal operations that he could have seen.⁽²²⁾ On the invitation of Eliot T. Galt, the Lethbridge coalmine owner, Dr. Mewburn left Winnipeg at -40°C and arrived on December 2, 1885 during a Chinook. On his arrival, there was no snow and everyone was in shirtsleeves. He assessed the surgical-administrative offer in the burgeoning coal town of Coal Banks. Enthused, Mewburn returned permanently after his WGH contract ended in January 1886.

Dr. Mewburn was appointed the medical manager of the newly constructed three bed Police and Mine

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16. Bergin, Darby *The Medical and Surgical History of the Canadian North-West Rebellion of 1885*, John Lovell and Son, 1886, pages 20-22 (Kerr), 40-41 (Bell), 41-43 (Roddick). For Roddick's role see H.E. MacDermot's *Sir Thomas Roddick*, pages 45-68, Macmillan, 1938.
17. Lampard, Robert For a discussion of the eighty-one cases admitted to the WGH including seventeen transferred by barge from Saskatoon to the WGH in July 1885, see *Military Medicine and Medical Care in the North-West Rebellions of 1870/71 and 1885* in Part 2. Medical care during the Rebellion was further discussed in the *Letters to the Editor of the CMAJ* 154: 1624-5, June 1, 1996 and in the *CMAJ*: 155: 1392-1395, November 15, 1996 by Messrs Lampard, McCulloch and Rickman; H.E. MacDermot's *Sir Thomas Roddick*, page 55; Darby Bergin's *The Medical and Surgical History of the Canadian North-West Rebellion of 1885*, page 20; Ross Mitchell's *Manitoba Surgical Pioneers*, *CJS* 3: 282-283, July 1960; and Ethel Johns and Beatrice Fines, *The WGH School of Nursing*, pages 7-9, 1988.
- Dr. Kerr, the first Dean of the Manitoba Medical College (1882-1887) left the MMC and WGH to become the head of surgery at a medical school in Washington, DC. There he performed the first cholecystectomy and intussusception reduction. He had already operated on the son of a colleague in Winnipeg and had successfully reduced the boy's intussusception.
18. Bergin, Darby *The Medical and Surgical History of Canadian North-West Rebellion*, pages 20-22. Report of Surgeon – Major James Kerr, April 16, 1886.
19. MacDermot, H. Ernest *Sir Thomas Roddick*, pages 76-77, 83 and Dr. Bergin's *Medical and Surgical History*, pages 20-21, Lovell, 1886.
20. Pocock, Geoffrey *Outrider of the Empire: The Life and Adventures of Roger Pocock 1865-1941*, pages 17-50, University of Alberta Press 2007. (in process)
21. Johns, Ethel, Fines, Beatrice *WGH School of Nursing*, pages 3-9, Centennial Edition 1988. The WGH increased from twenty beds (1873) to forty-beds (1876) to seventy-two beds (1884).
22. Carr, Ian, Beamish, Robert E. *Manitoba Medicine*, pages 28-30, 1999. The authors noted the first recorded operation in Manitoba was a lithotomy performed by Dr. J.A. O'Donnell in 1875. The first abdominal operation at WGH they record as being performed by Dr. H.H. Chown in 1886. This is inconsistent with Dr. H.A. Arnold's quote from Dr. Mewburn that he had only seen two or three abdominal operations before he left the WGH in January 1886. A sampling of contemporary British surgical experience was presented at the 57th annual meeting of the BMA and summarized in the *Northern Lancet*, pages 54-56, 1889.



*The Medical Faculty of McGill University circa 1882. 9-7
Dr. Osler is third from left, back row.*

Hospital. He was also given the post of NWMP Acting Assistant Surgeon. He joined NWMP Hospital Sergeant, E.A. Braithwaite.⁽²³⁾ Mewburn was registered to practice under the new NWT Medical Ordinance and became the first official (NWT) doctor in Lethbridge.⁽²⁴⁾ Seven months later, on August 15, 1886 Dr. Mewburn received a visit from his former teacher, Dr. (later Sir) William Osler and his brother, CPR shareholder Edmund B. Osler.⁽²⁵⁾ The next year (1887) Mewburn accepted the hand of PEI born Louise Augusta Nelson as his wife. She had come to Lethbridge as a governess for the children of the Assistant Mine Manager.⁽²⁶⁾

In 1891, with the financial help of mine owners Sir Alexander and his son Elliot Galt, the Lethbridge hos-

pital was increased from three to twelve beds. It was named the Galt Hospital and included an OR in the attic. The OR was likely the fourth one in Alberta.⁽²⁷⁾ After operating on a tubal pregnancy the next year, Mewburn described his experience in his first article in the medical literature. It was published in February 1893 in the *Montreal Medical Journal*.⁽²⁸⁾ The patient had initially refused emergency surgery. That delayed the operation eleven days. After receiving approval, a laparotomy was performed immediately. Massive amounts of blood were found in the lower abdomen. The patient rallied briefly then passed away later that day.

As the only physician in Lethbridge, Mewburn was offered and accepted several early medical contracts. His NWMP medical contract extended from 1886 to 1911. In 1911 Drs. Braithwaite and Mewburn were appointed the only two honorary NWMP surgeons in Alberta. Mewburn's honorary NWMP appointment continued until 1929, making him the second longest RCMP surgeon in the Force at forty-three consecutive years. His term was five years shorter than Dr. Braithwaite's appointment.⁽²⁹⁾ Dr. Mewburn also held the railway medical contract from Medicine Hat to Great Falls and participated in the CPR medical construction contract, during the building of the Crowsnest Pass rail line in 1899.

23. Braithwaite, Edward A. "Early Days of the RNWMP", pages 13, 28. Manuscript deposited in the Glenbow Museum, Calgary. Reprinted as "Reminiscences of a Hospital Sergeant", *Alberta History* 39: 15-25, Winter 1991. Braithwaite joined the NWMP in 1884. He served in the NW Rebellion, completed his medical training, and received his MD from the Manitoba Medical College in 1890. He left the NWMP in 1892. Also see the Braithwaite profile.
24. Johnston, Alex. *Lethbridge, Its Doctors Dentists and Drug Stores*, page 5, Lethbridge Historical Society Occasional publication #24, 1991. Johnston indicated Mewburn arrived in January 1886.
25. Hogan, David B. "Osler Goes West", *Annals RCPSC* 33(5): 316-319, August 2000. Reprinted in Part 2. The Osler party was in Coal Banks (Lethbridge), August 15, in Fort Macleod on the 16th and Calgary on the 18th, camping by a lake on the way. This visit likely gave rise to Dr. Kennedy's "typhomalaria" research request in December for a "collective investigation ... (of the fever with) records ... properly classified and worked up ... ought to be possible ... to found ... a treatise ..." as outlined in Assistant Surgeon Kennedy's annual NWMP Report for 1886 Kennedy's boss, Dr. A. Jukes, declined the request. The Jukes family was well known to Dr. Osler. Kennedy's disappointment was recounted in Mewburn's *Life and Work of Dr. G.A. Kennedy*, pages 327-328. Mewburn noted (1886) "One death [in Lethbridge] is recorded due to typhoid fever, which was in all probability contracted in Battleford". Mewburn did not equivocate over his diagnosis in his NWMP Report for 1886, Appendix W., pages 107-108, *Coles Canadiana*, 1973.
26. Arnold, Hugh A. "Frank Hamilton Mewburn", page 7.
27. Johnston, Alex et al. *Lethbridge, Its Doctors, Dentists and Drug Stores*, page 32. The first OR in NWT/Alberta was in Fort Macleod built by the NWMP in the renovations of 1883. The second one was built in Banff circa 1887 by Dr. R.G. Brett. The first public hospital with an OR was built in Medicine Hat in 1889. Dr. Brett of Banff was performing major abdominal surgery in his OR in Banff circa 1892 as described in R. Lampard's "Dr. R.G. Brett", *Alberta History* 51(2): 15, Spring 2003 and Dr. E.A. Braithwaite's memoir, "Early Days in the RNWMP", pages 38-39.
28. Mewburn, Frank H. "Case of Tubal-Pregnancy". *Montreal Medical Journal*, pages 3-4, February 1893. Dr. L.G. deVeber moved to Lethbridge from Fort Macleod and was giving anesthetics for Dr. Mewburn by 1891. See Alex Johnston's *Lethbridge Doctors*, pages 6, 32. A series of 248 intra-abdominal operations with seventeen deaths from 1890-1897, was reported by Dr. A.L. Smith of Montreal in the newly renamed *Winnipeg and Western Canada Lancet*, pages 217-219, 1897. In his paper Dr. Smith concluded the surgical management of tubal pregnancy was one of the most brilliant advances in abdominal surgery that had been made. He presented seven cases, all of whom recovered.
29. Braithwaite, Edward A. *Edmonton Journal*, February 18, 1946. Also see the Braithwaite profile.



9-8

Dr. W.S. Galbraith

Mewburn's Surgical Experience in Lethbridge

Dr. Mewburn had no contract to provide medical care to the Blood Indian Reserve. That didn't stop aboriginals arriving at his doorstep. In 1887 he diagnosed one patient as having an enlarged goiter. An interesting ceremony followed. Mewburn solemnly harangued the patient and the Indians accompanying him. "I shall have to make a big cut. If you all do as I tell you after the big cut is made this man may get well, but I cannot tell for sure until after I have made the big cut; and then if he does not get well, and if he should die you must not blame me. What do you say – shall I make the big cut?" "Ugh, Ugh, Ugh" came the reply from the sick man and his friends. The operation was a success.⁽³⁰⁾ His reputation amongst the aboriginals was established. Dr. Mewburn became known amongst the Indians of the NWT as "The Great Big Medicine Man".⁽³¹⁾ No doubt it reflected more on his competence than as a description of his size.⁽³²⁾

Francis Coulson described Mewburn's first recorded intra-abdominal operation in Lethbridge in 1887. It was to drain an abdominal abscess. For his OR table Dr. Mewburn used a pool table in the local saloon.⁽³³⁾ A barber gave the Chloroform anesthesia, a reversal of the historical origins of surgery. The most likely source of the abscess would have been a perforated appendix. There was no record of Dr. Mewburn removing the appendix. The patient recovered. Authors Francis Coulson and Drs. Hugh Arnold, Earle Scarlett and Peter Campbell reported this operation as the first appendectomy west of Winnipeg. Henri Chatenay agreed but recorded the operation as being performed in 1889.⁽³⁴⁾ Dr. W.S. Galbraith disagreed with all of them and described Mewburn's first planned appendectomy as performed in 1893.⁽³⁵⁾ J.D. Higinbotham, Dr. H.E. Rawlinson, and Dr. Alex Johnson agree with Galbraith.⁽³⁶⁾ In all probability Galbraith is correct as his testimony indicated.

In 1893 the future Dr. W.S. Galbraith was working as an assistant to pharmacist, J.D. Higinbotham in Lethbridge. Interested in learning about medicine, Galbraith asked to watch Dr. Mewburn, during what he (Galbraith) called Mewburn's "first" appendectomy. In an Appreciation to Dr. Mewburn after his death, Dr. Galbraith said it was his privilege, "then only looking on, to watch his development from surgery of amputations and abscesses to his first appendectomy in 1893. That patient had traveled two hundred miles to have it done and it had evidently ruptured sometime before, and everything was in a terrible mess as were most such cases in those days, before early interference was permitted. It is doubtful

30. Deane, R. Burton

Mounted Police Life in Canada, pages 44-48, Cassel, 1916.

31. Jamieson, Heber C.

Early Medicine in Alberta, page 91, AMA 1947.

32. Stanley, George D.

"Medical Archives and their Relation to the Profession", CACHB 15(2): 28-35, August 1950. Francis Coulson in Frank Hamilton Mewburn, CACHB 10(2): 125 referred to Dr. Mewburn as the "First Surgeon in the West".

33. Coulson, Francis S.

The First Surgeon in the West: Frank Hamilton Mewburn 1858-1929", CACHB 10(2): 120-125, 1945.

Frances Coulson was the daughter of a Lethbridge physician who worked with Dr. Mewburn circa 1910. She was a secretary-historian in the Calgary Associate Clinic. The story was recalled in Dr. H.A. Arnold's article on "Frank Hamilton Mewburn", page 9; Dr. Earle Scarlett's "Eastern Gate and Western Cavalcade" in the CACHB 21(1): 20-21, May 1956 and Dr. Peter Campbell's "Frank Hamilton Mewburn", CACHB 15(4): 65, 1951.

34. Chatenay, Henri

Country Doctors, page 11, Matrix Press 1980.

35. Galbraith, Walter S.

"Frank Hamilton Mewburn: Appreciations", CMAJ 20: 329, 1929.

36. Higinbotham, John D.

When the West was Young, page 170. At the Mewburn Cairn unveiling on June 9, 1937 Higinbotham recalled Mewburn's first appendix operation in the three bed hospital (n.d.) and his first appendectomy in the new hospital in 1893, in the Lethbridge Herald, June 10, 1937. So did Dr. H.E. Rawlinson in Frank Hamilton Mewburn, page 4; as did Alex Johnston in Lethbridge: Its Doctors, Dentists and Drug Stores, page 5. A comparison of dates and times, with the milestones recorded in W.J. Bishops *The Early History of Surgery*, page 172-181 (reference #1) confirms Galbraith et al as correct. Dr. N.T. McPhedran, a former Professor and Head of Surgery at UofC commented that appendicitis was well known into the 1900s, but still often not diagnosed well, until an abscess formed in the right lower quadrant of the abdomen. The treatment then was to drain the abscess. This 'delayed treatment' carried considerable hazards. *Prairie Medical Journal* 67(1):57, Spring 1997.

if the appendix was removed, but the patient got well and with increasing ease, cases were offered for his skill; hernias in plenty, an ectopic gestation which he reported, until December 10, 1903 came the climax as he (Mewburn) then thought, in a Caesarian section. His progress from that point was continuous."⁽³⁷⁾

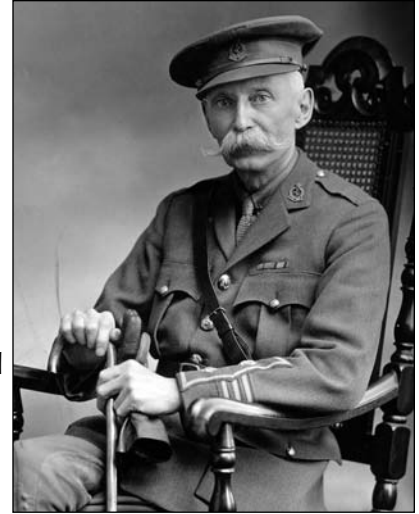
Mewburn appeared to confirm the 1893 date as his first appendectomy. He told his students, "I have seen several patients die with "perityphlitis" (the original name for appendicitis) and I had noticed articles appearing in the journals suggesting that the condition was essentially a purulent inflammation of the appendix and early resort to surgery was advocated. I determined that the next case that came along (which likely is the one Dr. Galbraith described) I would operate on without delay".⁽³⁸⁾

Mewburn's most audacious surgery was performed on November 15, 1890 in Fort Macleod. The patient had an osteomyelitis resulting in an ununited leg fracture. Drs. Mewburn and G.A. Kennedy did the surgery. They were assisted by Staff Sergeant E.A. Braithwaite. Bone chips from a dog's leg were inserted into the NWMP carpenter's ununited fracture site, following "Olliers Procedure", as it had recently been described in the French and American medical literature. Post-operatively the graft did not take, so Mewburn and Kennedy removed the chips on February 6, 1891 in Lethbridge.⁽³⁹⁾ The patient lived for over forty years, albeit with a leg that was two inches shorter than his non-operated leg.⁽⁴⁰⁾

Another early operation Mewburn performed was on a strangulated hernia. Mewburn said to the elderly gentleman, "I think you are going to die, but operating is the only thing I can do". The operating table was a meat block under a tree. The local butcher and

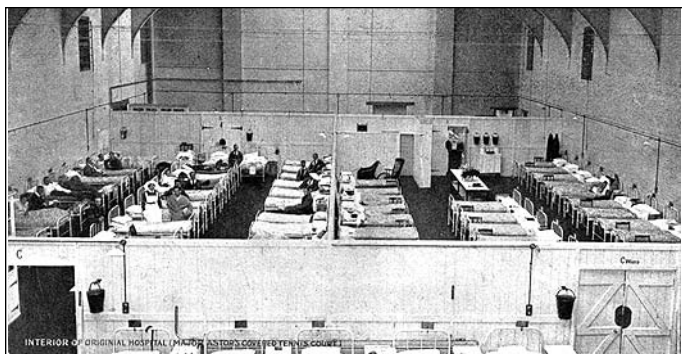
a well-known Lethbridge citizen Mr. C.B. Bowman, were pressed into action as the assistant and the anesthesiologist. One would assist until gastric heaving gained the upper hand, whereupon the other pallid assistant would relieve him. The patient survived.⁽⁴¹⁾

Dr. Reginald Deane, of Calgary, met Mewburn while a youth growing up in Lethbridge. He was told that Mewburn was "a wizard with the knife". The first operation Deane was allowed to watch was on a ninety-year-old gentleman with senile gangrene of the right hand. Mewburn amputated the arm through the middle of the humerus. Deane's duty was to hold up the arm. The patient survived. The operation was performed in the unfinished attic of the old Galt hospital. Deane recalled Mewburn operating on another case of intestinal obstruction in a room over a livery stable. The liveryman poured the anesthetic and a roustabout worked as a helper. Deane's third recollection was in 1898, after he had entered medical practice in Lethbridge. Dr. Mewburn asked him to see a patient with a kidney stone. Deane recommended chemical dissolution of the stone, using a new German drug "Urotropine". Mewburn said quizzically, "You think so?" A couple of days later the cutting took place and



Lt. Col. F.H. Mewburn 9-9

37. Galbraith, Walter S. "Frank Hamilton Mewburn", page 329. J.D. Higinbotham noted Mewburn performed countless hernias, in *When the West was Young*, page 170. Though Mewburn was unnamed as the surgeon, when Theodore Brandley perforated his gallbladder, he placed his faith and trust in the Lord and "the young surgeons who had never witnessed a gallstone operation". After surgery in October 1901 Brandley slowly recovered. A sinus tract through the skin discharged for the next 25 years. See *Alberta History* 9(3): 23-29, Summer 1961.
38. Rawlinson, H.E. "Frank Hamilton Mewburn", page 4.
39. Johnston, Alex et al. *Lethbridge: Its Doctors, Dentists and Drug Stores*, pages 9, 32, 41, Occasional publication #24, Lethbridge Historical Society 1991. Also see the profile of Dr. G.A. Kennedy.
40. Mewburn, Frank H. "The Life and Work of Dr. George A. Kennedy", page 329.
41. Coulson, Francis S. "The First Surgeon in the West", page 123. Another spectacular early case in which Mewburn was involved, was a wound exploration performed on Fort Macleod lawyer C.C. McCaul. Two months before the operation McCaul had a gun shot accident, resulting in a penetrating wound through his chest. Dr. Kennedy, using hindsight, did not think the surgery should have been performed, as he wrote in the *Canadian Practitioner*, pages 377-379, December 1888. McCaul survived until 1928 or age seventy-one. For more details on the operation see Mewburn's "The Life and Work of Dr. George A. Kennedy" *CMAJ*: 329, 1929; the profile of "Dr. G.A. Kennedy." For the patient's legal life, see A.D. Ridge's "C.C. McCaul, Pioneer Lawyer", *Alberta History* 21(1): 21-25, 1973.



WWI Taplow Hospital – a converted tennis court. 9-10

a stone the size of a pigeon's egg was removed from the kidney.⁽⁴²⁾

Usually abdominal surgery was done on a last ditch basis which made it even more difficult.⁽⁴³⁾ The same was likely true in the first Saskatchewan case, where a laparotomy was performed by Dr. M.M. Seymour.⁽⁴⁴⁾ If it was in Fort Qu'Appelle where he first worked, there was no OR. If it was performed in the Regina General Hospital, which was the first public hospital in Saskatchewan with an OR, it would have been after 1899.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Dr. Peter Campbell wrote that Dr. Mewburn was a slow surgeon. He gave an anesthetic for five and a half hours, while Mewburn excised the patient's bilateral varicose veins. That patient survived too.

Another example was a thyroidectomy, which took over two hours to complete.⁽⁴⁶⁾

To keep medically current, Dr. Mewburn made regular pilgrimages to visit the great surgeons of his day, especially to Baltimore where his lifelong friend Dr. William Osler was the Professor of Medicine. Every night Mewburn would read the surgical literature for two hours. To keep diagnostically current, Dr. Mewburn bought the Galt hospital their first x-ray machine at his own expense.⁽⁴⁷⁾ As patient confidence in his judgment increased, his reputation spread and his surgical practice expanded.⁽⁴⁸⁾

Medical and Community Affairs 1889-1913

Dr. Mewburn attended the 1889 CMA annual meeting in Banff. He was a charter member of the NWT Medical Association.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Seventeen years later in 1906, he was appointed to the first Board of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta and remained on it from 1906-1913, becoming the College President in 1912/13.⁽⁵⁰⁾ He was appointed to the first provincial Board of Health (1907-1910) and made significant contributions to it and the CMA.⁽⁵¹⁾

Mewburn was well known in Lethbridge. He made daily rounds on horseback until 1910, even though he owned a car and had a chauffeur to drive it.⁽⁵²⁾ His energy was inexhaustible, and he always found time

42. Edwards, Glen E., Harkness, D.B.

Life Near the Bone, pages 15-21, 163-164, 166, privately printed, 1991.

43. Jamieson, Heber C.

Early Medicine in Alberta, page 91-92, AMA, 1947. Also see the Western Canadian Medical Journal 2(3): 105-113, 271, 1908 (Appendicitis, a plead for early operation) and 4:451-456, 1910 (Surgery's Balance Sheet). The mortality rate for appendicitis varied from three to one hundred percent, depending on the surgical procedure used, the severity of the case and the judgment and experience of the surgeon, the type of anesthetic used, the experience of the person giving it, and the timeliness of the patient's consent.

44. Scarlett, Earle P.

"Eastern Gate and Western Cavalcade: McGill men in Western Canada", CACHB 21(1): 18-19, May 1956.

45. Feather, Joan

"Hospitals in Saskatchewan in Territorial Days", Saskatchewan History 40(2): 62-71, Spring 1987; Stuart Houston's "Early Saskatchewan Hospitals", Annals of the RCPSC 23(3): 265-270, May 1990 and "Maurice MacDonald Seymour: A Leader in Public Health", Annals of the RCPSC 31(1): 41-43, February 1998.

A new hospital of twenty-five beds was built for the 250 NWMP detachment in Regina in 1887. No surgery/dispensary or drug storage rooms were included in the plans, so ten beds (two wards) on the main floor were used for these purposes. In Dr. A. Jukes' NWMP report from Regina for 1887, he recorded two clavicular fractures and one inguinal hernia, all treated conservatively, and one large scalp "tumor" as "operated on." For Dr. Augustus Jukes NWMP Report for 1887, see pages 98-104 in *Law and Order*, Coles Canadiana, 1973.

46. Campbell, Peter M.

"Frank Hamilton Mewburn", CACHB 15(4): 61-69, February 1951.

47. Campbell, Peter M.

"Frank Hamilton Mewburn", page 65.

48. Learmonth, George E.

"The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Alberta Medical Association", AMB 20(3): 54, 1955.

49. Learmonth, George E.

"The Fiftieth Anniversary", pages 51-57. Also see G.D. Stanley's "The NWT Medical Association", CACHB 16(2): 38-39, August 1951 and Hilda Neatby's "The Medical Profession in the North-West Territories" (1889-1906) in Part 2.

50. Jamieson, Heber C.

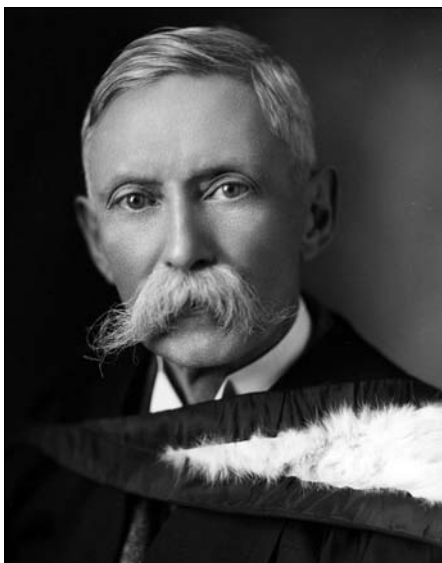
Early Medicine in Alberta, pages 53-54, 201.

51. MacDermot, H. Ernest

The History of the Canadian Medical Association Volume II: 3, 1958. Also see H.C. Jamieson's *Early Medicine in Alberta*, pages 72-73 and A. Schartner's *Health Units of Alberta*, pages 22-24, HUAA, 1982.

52. Mewburn, Frank H.

Edmonton Journal, January 10, 1956.



Dr. Frank Mewburn, first UofA Professor and Head of Surgery, 1921-1929

for his community.⁽⁵³⁾ He sat on the Lethbridge School Board, the Board of Trade, the Town Council and was Mayor in 1899, 1900, and 1905. In real estate Dr. Mewburn admitted he was lucky when he bought nine lots adjacent to his home, including three ostensibly to avoid a Chinese Laundry being built next door.

He paid less than \$1,000 for all of them. Thirteen years later he sold the lots for \$90,000 cash. Before leaving Lethbridge in 1913, he wrote off \$50,000 in unpaid services, because the patient “didn’t have a bean and so he charged it to the Lord”⁽⁵⁴⁾. That same year Dr. Mewburn received a charter FACS, the first year they were granted and moved to Calgary population 43,700. There he limited his practice to surgery at the Calgary General Hospital, where he was appointed the Chief Surgeon.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The move united Dr. Mewburn with his older brother Lloyd T. Mewburn, who had moved to Calgary in 1903.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Mewburn and WWI 1914-1921

Dr. Mewburn did not participate in the Boer War, probably because the Medical Corps was run by the

British Army and the expected one-year tenure of the Lord Strathcona Horse was too short to entice a physician to join the medical militia. Besides, he was the Mayor of Lethbridge.

In 1914 the Minister of the Militia, Sam Hughes, notified Dr. Mewburn that his application to join the Canadian Army Medical Corps was unacceptable, because he was too old at age 55. Mewburn wired back, “Reference your wire – go to hell! I’m going anyway.”⁽⁵⁷⁾ He cabled Dr. William Osler, telephoned his cousin Brigadier General S.G. Mewburn, and pulled wires through Prime Minister Robert Borden and Colonel Sam Steele to be taken on as a Major.

Dr. Mewburn paid his own way to England. His wife accompanied him. He was “taken on strength and posted to Depot C. CAMC”, Shorncliffe, England on July 1, 1915. The posting was confirmed three weeks before the Mewburns left Canada on July 21, 1915.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Dr. Mewburn was transferred to the #15 Canadian General (Duchess of Connaught) Red Cross Hospital at Taplow on the Astor Estate, Clivedon, on



9-12

Surgical Staff at the Canadian Hospital, Taplow circa 1917. Dr. Mewburn is third from left, front row. Dr. AR Munroe is sixth from left, standing

53. LHS Newsletter Lethbridge Historical Society Newsletter, Number 2, page 3, March 2, 2004. Mayor Mewburn asked Will and Harry Fairfield to start a nursery to supply trees for Lethbridge boulevards. They did.
54. Campbell, Peter M. “Frank Hamilton Mewburn”, page 68; F.S. Coulsons, “The First Surgeon in the West”, page 124. Dr. Mewburn was not always so financially successful. See R. Burton Deane’s *Mounted Police Life in Canada*, page 72.
55. Saddler, H., et al *Calgary General Hospital 1890-1955, Sixty-five Years of Community Services*, page 20, CGH 1955. Dr. H.G. Mackid also received his FACS in the first year 1913. (Personal communication S. Rishworth, American College of Surgeons, November 25, 2003.) That same year Mewburn’s friend of 27 years, Dr. G. A. Kennedy developed a soon to be fatal oral cancer and was referred to Winnipeg for treatment.
56. MacRae, Archibald O. *History of the Province of Alberta* Volume I: 578-579, 1912.
57. Campbell, Peter M. “Frank Hamilton Mewburn”, page 63. Also see Dr. G.D. Stanley’s “Medical Archives and their Relation to the Profession”, CACHB 15(2): 32, August 1950, and Dr. H.E. Rawlinson’s, “Frank Hamilton Mewburn”, page 4.
58. Mewburn, Frank H. WWI Military records: Record of Promotions, etc. Reference RG 150, Box 6145-70, National Archives of Canada. Dr. Mewburn’s second posting to the CAMC Medical Depot at Shorncliffe (March 10-April 17, 1917), overlapped with the first month Dr. E.G. Mason was permanently posted to the Depot. The large Shorncliffe base was under the overall command of General (Sir) Sam Steele. For more dates see the Dr. E.G. Mason profile. For a resume of the Dr. F. Hasting Mewburn transfer from the artillery to his father’s hospital at Taplow in 1918, the birth of a Mewburn grandson, and Mrs. Mewburn’s return to Canada in June 1918, see Dr. H.A. Arnold’s “Dr. Frank Hamilton Mewburn, Pioneer Surgeon of the West”, Lethbridge Historical Society Newsletter, Number 6, pages 2-4, November 1991.

September 9, 1915. He remained there except for two temporary transfers back to the CAMC Medical Depot from February 22 – May 10, 1915 and March 15 – April 17, 1917.

Dr. Mewburn was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on August 14, 1916 and was made second in command of the Taplow Hospital on April 17, 1917. His second assignment to the CAMC Depot, in March/April 1917, overlapped with Dr. E.G. Mason's first month at the Depot. The two were both there during the Battle of Vimy Ridge on April 9-12, 1917 and the capture of the two highest points on the ridge by Lt. Col. Mason's 50th Battalion.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Lt. Col. Mewburn was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire on June 7, 1918.⁽⁶⁰⁾

The chief medical consultant at Taplow was Sir William Osler. The two spent many happy weekends together. Osler procured a book for him mentioning the Mewburn Family, which he autographed "to the brilliant son of a more brilliant father".⁽⁶¹⁾ It became one of Mewburn's prized possessions. In May 1919 Lt. Col. Mewburn was demobilized and returned to Calgary where he resumed his practice and continued to limit it to surgery.

UofA's First Professor of Surgery 1921-1929

In 1921 Dr. Mewburn accepted an offer from the newly appointed UofA Dean of Medicine, Dr. A.C. Rankin, to become the first full-time Professor of Surgery. In Dr. Reginald Deane's testimonial to him at Mewburn's 1921 Calgary farewell banquet, Deane highlighted Mewburn's "insatiable appetite for work, attention to detail whether large or small, and his treatment of the rich and poor equally."⁽⁶²⁾

The funding for Dr. Mewburn's UofA Faculty of Medicine position came from interest on the \$500,000 1920 Rockefeller Foundation conditional grant to the UofA.⁽⁶³⁾ Two of the conditions were to appoint the first clinical teachers in surgery and medicine and to complete a full medical degree-granting program. Drs. Mewburn and Egerton Pope were appointed to full-time faculty positions in Surgery and Medicine respectively, and paid \$5,000/year.⁽⁶⁴⁾

After moving to Edmonton, Mewburn resumed his surgical practice from an office in the McLeod building. With the assistance of Dr. H.C. Jamieson, Dr. Mewburn started the popular medical/surgical bedside rounds organized in the Osler tradition. In December 1922, Mewburn was elected the first Chairman of the UAH Medical Advisory Board, shortly after the University reassumed responsibility for the old Strathcona Hospital from the Soldier's Civilian Re-establishment Commission, and renamed it the University of Alberta Hospital.⁽⁶⁵⁾

In 1923, the three-year RN and five-year Nursing Degree programs were restarted at the UAH. Dr.



9-13

The Strathcona, renamed the University Hospital in 1922

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59. Lampard, Robert Profile of Dr. E.G. Mason. Desmond Morton added a note in "Military Medicine and State Medicine", pages 52-53, published in C.D. Naylor's *Medical Care and the State*, McGill Queens, 1992, that senior Taplow medical officers were suspected of abusing their perquisites for pleasure or profit. No date(s) or names were given.
60. Macbeth, Robert A. "Alexander Russel Munroe", *Canadian Journal of Surgery* 10: 3-10, January 1967. Other surgeons under his command included Captains R.M. Janes the future Head of Surgery at UofT, Captain A. Grant Fleming the future Dean of Medicine at McGill and Dr. A.R. Munroe who succeeded Mewburn as the Head of Surgery at UofA in 1929.
61. Coulson, Francis S. "First Surgeon in the West: Frank Hamilton Mewburn", page 124.
62. Edwards, Glen E.,
Harkness, Douglas B. *Life Near the Bone*, page 20, for an address to the Calgary Medical Society by Dr. Reginald Deane. The manuscript source was in the possession of Audrey Manning.
63. Fedunkiw, Marianne "The UofA and Rockefeller Foundation", in Part 2.
64. Vant, J. Ross,
Cashman, Tony W. *More Than a Hospital*, page 66, UAH, 1986. Also see Dr. A.C. Rankin's "The Provincial Medical School", *AMB* 1(2): 7-11, 1935 and E.A. Corbet's *Frontiers of Medicine*, pages 29-33, UofA, 1990. The Mewburn's bought a house, where the AMA and College offices later stood at 9901-108th Street. Dr. D.R. Wilson recalled delivering their newspaper and how Dr. Mewburn kept his horse in the back yard. Personal communication Dr. R.A. Burns, CPSA Registrar, December 11, 2003.
65. McGugan, Angus C. *History of the University of Alberta Hospital*, pages 8, 22, UAH, 1964. Also see R. Vant and T. Cashman's *More Than a Hospital*, page 69.



Mewburn Pavilion, UAH Edmonton, opened in 1945⁹⁻¹⁴

Mewburn along with UofA President H.M Tory and Dean A.C. Rankin, were identified as the three persons most instrumental in the development of those two programs.⁽⁶⁶⁾ The nursing students adored him. He would come for morning rounds with a retinue of students singing in high falsetto "... every little movement has a meaning all its own. He wore a rose in his buttonhole ... and always a fresh lab coat, shiny white and crisp ... He had a chauffeur, Lawrence, who always dressed in a grey uniform ... He had been the Colonel's batman overseas."⁽⁶⁷⁾

There were many colourful stories told by "The Colonel's" friends and students about Mewburn's care for his patients.⁽⁶⁸⁾ It was considered beyond reproach. He would move his patient to a private room if they were disturbing others and would pay for it and any special nurses, himself.

The J.J. Ower Reporting Club was the first medical literature review "club" started at the UofA, to teach

senior medical students. In 1925 it was renamed the Mewburn Club. Dr. Ower, the future Dean of Medicine remained the Secretary from 1920-1959.

In 1927, Dr. Mewburn was elected the second Vice-President of the American College of Surgeons,⁽⁶⁹⁾ one year after Dr. J.S. McEachern of Calgary held the position.

Dr Mewburn's medical bibliography of four articles was short.⁽⁷⁰⁾ He was a good writer and speaker but neither were a priority. After he gave a UofA presentation on Lord Lister and his antiseptic technique, he was asked to give the speech on CFRN radio.⁽⁷¹⁾ When he discovered that Dr. Braithwaite had been a student of Lord Lister, the responsibility for the presentation was quickly transferred.

In harness to the last, Dr. Mewburn operated all day with his son Hank, only to miss his chauffeur and walk home in a winter storm. Pneumonia followed and he succumbed four days later on January 29, 1929 leaving behind two sons and one daughter.⁽⁷²⁾ One son (Dr. F.H.H. Mewburn) became the first orthopedic surgeon and head of Orthopedics at the UAH. His other son Arthur entered the oil business. The Mewburns daughter Helene married Beverley Robinson.⁽⁷³⁾ A grandson Dr. Robert Mewburn, became a Psychiatrist and practiced in Vancouver.

66. Brighty, Kate

"History of Nursing in Alberta 1942." History of Nursing Questionnaire for the University of Alberta Hospital and School of Nursing, pages 1-2. Completed by Helen S. Peters, Superintendent of Nurses, February 8, 1940. Also see Janet Ross-Kerr's *Prepared to Care*, pages 158-159, UofA Press, 1998.

67. Wilson, B.

To Teach this Art, pages 43-44, UofA 1977.

68. Vant, J. Ross,
Cashman, Tony

More Than a Hospital, UAH, 1986, pages 66-69 and Dr. P.M. Campbell's "Frank Hamilton Mewburn," CACHB 15(4): 61-69. For more stories see J.D. Higinbotham's *When the West was Young*, pages 163, 169, 171-172; G.D. Stanley in the CACHB 15(2): 30-33; H.E. Rawlinson's "Frank Hamilton Mewburn," pages 4-5; H.C. Jamieson's *Early Medicine in Alberta* page 91; E.P. Scarlett's article in the CACHB 21(1): 20-21, May 1956; T. Cashman's *Heritage of Service*, page 37, AARN 1966; B. Wilson's *To Teach this Art*, pages 43-44, 103, UofA 1977; L. Poelman's *White Caps and Red Roses*, pages 2-6, Lethbridge, circa 1980; C.A. Magrath's *The Galts*, page 29, circa 1929 in the Galt Museum; E.A. Braithwaite's "Early Days in the RNWMP," page 33; G.E. Edwards and D.B. Harkness *Life Near the Bone*, page 20.

Dr. Scarlett felt Drs. F.H. Mewburn, G.D. Stanley and Bob Edwards were the three most memorable figures in Alberta to 1935, in his Transcript of an Interview recorded by Dr. C.G. Roland page 31, November 1978, Glenbow.

69. Stephenson, G.W.

American College of Surgeons at 75, page 172 ACS, 1994. Dr. Mewburn followed Drs. F.N.G. Starr (1924/5) and Dr. J.S. McEachern (1925/6) as second Vice-Presidents of the ACS.

70. Mewburn, Frank H.

1) "Case of Tubal Pregnancy". *Montreal Medical Journal*, pages 3-4, February 1893; 2) "Observations on (about 200) Lesions of Peripheral Nerves, with special reference to pre-operative and post-operative treatment," *Medical Quarterly*, (Ottawa), pages 279-294, October 1919. The topic was previously presented to the Medical Society of the Witley Camp Area, the Epsom Society and the Medical Society, Calgary (n.d.). Mewburn closed with the comment "End result...statistics (on about 200 cases of peripheral nerve lesions) will appear later. The results so far obtained, however, have been such as to give great encouragement". No "End result" statistical reports have been found. 3) "The Life and Work of Dr. George A. Kennedy," *CMAJ* 21: 327-330, 1929 after presentation to the Calgary Medical Society February 7, 1928; 4) "Notes on the Re-organization of the Department of Surgery, University of Alberta", 1923. His son F.H.H. (Hank) Mewburn wrote a "Report of the Orthopedic Department, University of Alberta" in 1924.

71. Braithwaite, Edward A. "Early Days in the RNWMP," page 34.

72. Higinbotham, John D. *When the West was Young*, page 173.

73. Arnold, Hugh A.

"Frank Hamilton Mewburn," page 8. Also referenced in A.O. MacRae's *History of Alberta*, Volume II: 776, 1912. Helene became Mrs. Beverley Robinson of Toronto, *Calgary Herald* April 27, 1927.

He passed away in 1977, ending the Mewburn medical dynasty at seven consecutive generations, or 212 continuous years.⁽⁷⁴⁾ 145 years were practiced in Canada.

In the End, 1929

In his testimonial, Dean Rankin described Dr. Mewburn as an energetic self-sacrificing, unselfish man of integrity, a wise and respected counselor, and a sympathetic associate and friend. Dr. W.S. Galbraith, his partner in Lethbridge for six years, did not credit Mewburn with scholastic brilliance, but did reflect on his keenness to follow known techniques, his surgical daring, and his desire to learn, whether it was from colleagues, books, journals or yearly pilgrimages to the clinics of great surgeons. Mewburn's epitaph Galbraith said was to give your best; to succeed with what you have. "He was straight forward to friend and foe alike and his friendship highly prized."⁽⁷⁵⁾

At Dr. Mewburn's request, his coffin was wrapped in a Union Jack, carried on a gun carriage flanked by a Mounted Police Guard of Honor and followed by a saddled horse with Mewburn's boots reversed and a military band.⁽⁷⁶⁾ In his will Mewburn gifted his medical library, including his many journals, to the UofA. Along with the Edmonton Academy of Medicine's Library, it formed the core of the UofA Medical Library.⁽⁷⁷⁾



Mewburn 9-15
Commemorative Plaque, originally placed in the Entranceway to the UofA Medical School, July 1930

The UofA awarded him an Honorary Doctorate in 1922 one year after his alma mater McGill had. A plaque commemorating Dr. Mewburn as the first full-time Professor of Surgery was placed by the UofA Board of Governors in the entrance hall of the old Medical Building. It

acknowledged his "more than forty years with the practice and teaching of medicine in western Canada. A life securely built into the Foundation of this Province".⁽⁷⁸⁾

The Dr. F.H. Mewburn chapter of the IODE was formed in 1930. A cairn in front of the Galt Hospital in Lethbridge was unveiled in his memory in 1937. It was christened with wild flowers by Blood Chief Shot Both Sides.⁽⁷⁹⁾ The Mewburn Pavilion for returning veterans was built in Edmonton on the UAH site at the end of WWII, and named after him in 1945. In 2005 Dr. Mewburn was named one of Alberta's 100 Physicians of the Century. The Mewburn Gold Medal in Surgery continues to commemorate his pioneering contributions to surgery in Alberta.

Dr. Mewburn may have been short in stature, but he cast a long shadow over the practice of Medicine and Surgery in the NWT and Alberta.

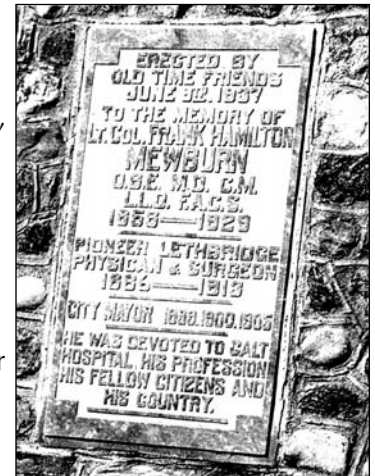
Related Profiles:

deVeber, Lafferty, Brett, Kennedy, Mackid, Malcolmson, McEachern, Mason, W.A. Wilson, Rankin, Jamieson

Related Perspectives:

Military Medicine and Medical Care in the North-West Rebellion of 1870/71 and 1885, Osler Goes West, The First CMA Convention in Banff, The Medical Profession in the North-West Territories, The UofA and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Key Words: McGill, NW Rebellion, Early Surgery and surgical firsts, Lethbridge Mayor, Osler, NWMP, WWI, UofA Professor of Surgery, 1920 Rockefeller Grant, Mewburn Gold Medal



Mewburn Memorial Cairn, Unveiled June 9, 1937, Lethbridge, 9-16

74. Macbeth, Robert A. Personal communication May 23, 2003. The two Roberts (Macbeth, Mewburn) grew up together in Edmonton. The dynasty of seven generations of Mewburn doctors started in 1765 and ended in 1977. Dr. Macbeth wrote the Dictionary of Canadian Biography profile of "Dr. Mewburn," DCB 15: 740-742, 2005.

75. Mewburn, Frank H. "Obituaries and Appreciations" by Dr. H.C. Jamieson, A.C. Rankin and W.S. Galbraith, CMAJ 20: 328-329, 1929.

76. Campbell, Peter M. "Frank Hamilton Mewburn," page 69.

77. Rawlinson, H.E. "Frank Hamilton Mewburn," page 4. The minutes of the Council of Physicians and Surgeons, for December 19, 1913 and September 21, 1914 in Volume I, indicate the College gave the Edmonton Academy of Medicine \$500 to start their library in 1915. The Mewburn and Edmonton Academy of Medicine libraries were considered to have been the core of the UofA (now Scott) medical library.

78. Rankin, Allan C. "University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine," AMB 1(2): 7-11, 1935 and G.E. Edwards and D.B. Harkness' *Life Near the Bone*, page 35.

79. AMB Editor General News, Alberta Medical Bulletin, page 4, July 1937. See the Lethbridge Herald, June 10, 1937 for extensive coverage of the event.