

AUGUSTA ADAMSON

In 1953, after government approval to build the South Peel Hospital (SPH), Mrs. Augusta Adamson spearheaded the preliminary research of how hospital auxiliaries were run in Ontario. Thus the Women's Auxiliary of what is now the Mississauga Trillium Hospital began.

Augusta Adamson was the first president and the Auxiliary's board met each month at the home of either Mrs. Adamson or Lillian Parsons from 1955 until 1958, when the Auxiliary Room in the Hospital opened. To keep people informed of the Auxiliary's activities, Augusta Adamson, edited and issued the Auxiliary's first Newsletter in February 1956. In it, she outlined the purpose and activities of the new organisation. At the laying of the cornerstone of the new South Peel Hospital Mrs. Adamson read a list of contents sealed in a copper time capsule that had been placed in the cornerstone crypt:

At the Hospital Board's Meeting in October 1956, Mrs. Adamson reported an active Auxiliary membership that had grown to 1,870. She said that the group had begun the year with a bank balance of \$8.65. After all expenses had been met and over \$600 spent on sewing materials for the first target of the Auxiliary to build a linen fund for the hospital, the bank balance at this meeting was \$5,700.



Innovative ways to raise funds for a hospital, or any other charitable body, are always welcomed by busy executives. The one that follows appealed to the patriotism among Auxiliary members, as well as support for the community's hospital. Mrs. Adamson wrote to all members on October 23, 1957 explaining the fund raising sale of the Twelfth Issue of Canada Savings Bonds. She added that in 1956 the Auxiliary had received \$3.75 for every \$1,000 bond bought through the Auxiliary as sub agent, and although the amount raised in the previous year was not large, it was a very welcome addition to the Linen Fund. This year, by sending the letter to members earlier, she hoped the results would be better. "We know that this year particularly, people with money to invest, will be more likely to buy bonds than almost any other investment, owing to the uncertain state of the Stock Market." She remarked on the growing awareness of all Canadians, for the need to invest in the development of Canada. "We unhesitatingly recommend the purchase of Canada Savings Bonds again, as a gesture of confidence in the undoubted future of our own country and consider it an honour for our Auxiliary to be connected with this campaign of national importance."

In May 1958 the South Peel Hospital admitted its first patient and plans for the official opening of the building were well in hand. As the day of the Opening came closer, the excitement in the community grew more intense. Many hours and much effort had been given by an increasing number of volunteers in the Women's Auxiliary under Mrs. Adamson's leadership, as well as by employed personnel. Soon their devotion to this cause would be rewarded. In *The Globe and Mail*, Friday, May 2, 1958, an article outlined the plans of the Auxiliary to receive 3,000 guests at the Open House. In a "red-letter" weekend for the Auxiliary, its President Mrs. Anthony Adamson, who was also Vice President of the Hospital Board, received guests and introduced the Hon. Waldo Monteith, Federal Minister of Health and Welfare at the Opening, special "Tea".

Through Mrs. Adamson's dedication and effort of leadership, the Auxiliary was the largest in the Metropolitan Toronto area and had been operating for two and a half years before the building of the Hospital. The recognised importance of the project kept up enthusiasm among the citizens, and careful organisation helped maintain the momentum. From Streetsville to Lake Ontario, Mrs. Adamson's committees or areas accounted for 1,900 women, all of whom volunteered their time.

Augusta Adamson resigned in 1959 as president of the South Peel Hospital Women's Auxiliary, which she had helped research and found more than four years earlier. In an interview with this author, for the Auxiliary's 30th Anniversary, Mrs. Adamson said her work with the Hospital Auxiliary had been, "a wonderful and satisfying experience." At her retirement on February 12, 1959, Mrs. Adamson was presented with the Auxiliary Life Membership pin. The South Peel Hospital Women's Auxiliary, with grateful affection for her guidance and leadership, also made a presentation of a book enhanced with many drawings and a tribute verse. The poem is available to read at the Mississauga South Historical Society's exhibit.