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**EDWARD AINSLIE BRAITHWAITE, MD
1862-1949**

EARLY DAYS OF THE R.N.W.M.P.

After leaving the United Service College, Westward Ho, Devonshire, I went to King's College Hospital, London, England. The College was a wing of Somerset House in the Strand. The Hospital was in Great Portugal Street, back of Lincoln Inn Fields, and has since been removed to Denmark Hill. Going from the College to the Hospital we had to pass the "Old Curiosity Shop" of Dickens' fame.

At K. C. Hospital Mr. Wood was our principal surgeon, then Mr. Joseph Lister. Curiously a patient came to him from Alaska - a case of cancer, but too late to do anything. Almost the first operation I saw was for cancer of the tongue. The lower jaw was split for the operation. At this time we had no laboratory. History was just about started at the Westminster Hospital. Later on the developments were wonderful.

I had the first X-ray in Edmonton. One you had to hand turn for twenty minutes. Later I got an electric attachment, later still an electric X-ray that I sold, I think it was to Dr. Hodson, and I got the latest model, which I sold to the General Hospital here as I saw that X-ray work was a one man job. Gangrene of the leg was almost certain death. During the Great War, Dakins solution was introduced producing almost a cure. Look at the development of anaesthetics that have come into use. Look at the number of people who died from inflammation of the bowels. Now we know that the appendix was the villain of that attack.

EDWARD AINSLIE BRAITHWAITE, MD

1862-1949

NWMP/RNWMP Surgeon 1884-1931

NWT/Alberta Coroner 1896-1948

Edmonton Medical Officer of Health 1892-1907

Alberta Inspector of Hospitals 1920-1938

Introduction

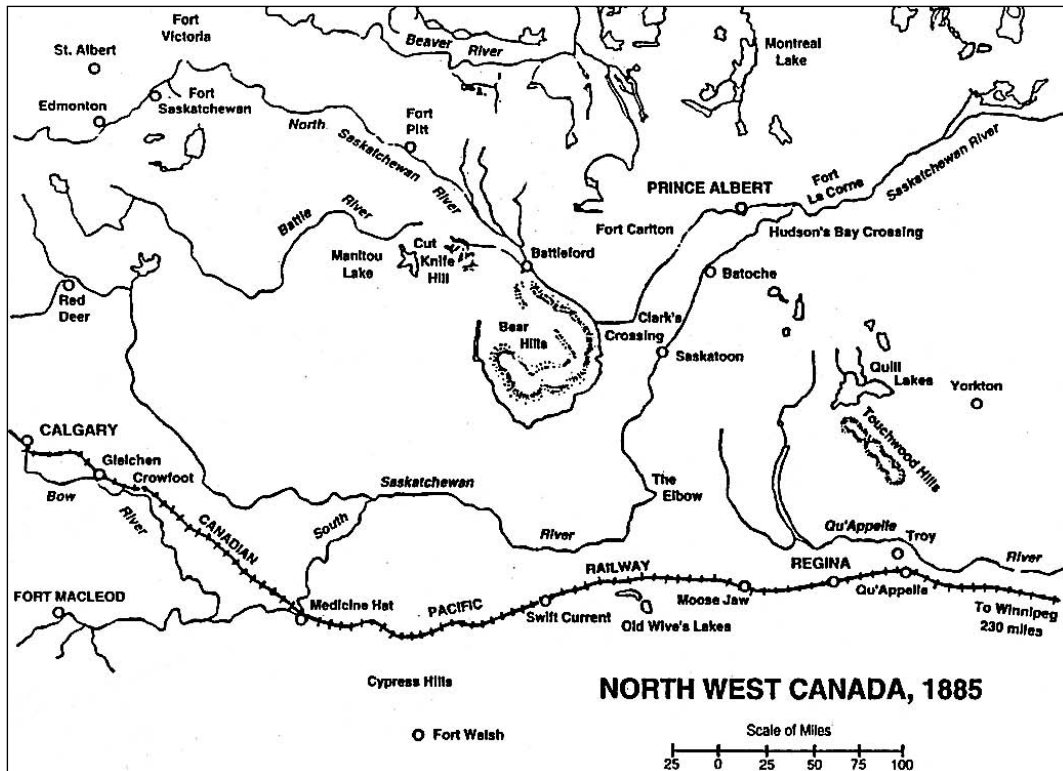
Dr. Edward Ainslie Braithwaite played an important part in the progress of medicine on the prairies for over sixty years from 1883 to 1947. His contributions were unrivaled in duration, breadth, and medical practice firsts. Braithwaite's medical career started as an NWMP Hospital Sergeant in 1884. He completed his MD at the Manitoba Medical College in 1890, before leaving the NWMP two years later. His first and only private practice began in Edmonton in 1892. He was appointed Edmonton's Public Health Officer, the Canadian Northern Railway's chief doctor, Alberta's Chief Provincial Coroner, and Hospital Inspector. Braithwaite authored a colorful, anecdotal

personal memoir of his reminiscences entitled *Early Days of the RNWMP* in 1941.⁽¹⁾

From Youth to Medical School, then Canada 1862-1884:

Dr. Edward Ainslie Braithwaite was born at Alne in Yorkshire, England on February 16, 1862. His father William was a Vicar. Education was important to his parents, so they sent Ernest to school in Devon. A contemporary classmate of Ernest's was Rudyard Kipling.

Edward started his medical school training in 1879 at King's College Hospital, London.⁽²⁾ One of his teachers was the renowned antiseptic surgeon, Joseph



Map of the NWT with NW Rebellion landmarks, 1885

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1. Braithwaite, Edward A. "Early Days of the RNWMP." Forty-eight page manuscript, completed September-December 1941. Given to Dr. G.R. Johnson January 2, 1942. Deposited as M600 File 2, Glenbow, Calgary. Reprinted with minor editing by Hugh A. Dempsey as "Reminiscences of a Hospital Sergeant" by Edward A. Braithwaite, *Alberta History* 39(1): 15-25, Winter 1991. The RCMP began as the NWMP (1873-1904); were renamed the RNWMP (1904-1920); and became the RCMP in 1920.
2. MacRae, Archibald O. *History of the Province of Alberta*, Volume II: 876-877, Western Canada Publishing, 1912. Apparently he rescued Kipling from the hands of the school bully, *Edmonton Journal*, December 12, 1957.

Lister. But his medical education did not progress as expected. By his own admission he took three “educational breaks” during his four years at Kings College.

During the third educational break in 1884, young Braithwaite traveled to Canada. Worried about Edward in rugged Canada, his mother tore a five pound note in half and sent one half to Judge Scott in Toronto and gave the other half to young Edward. The reattached note helped ‘grub-stake’ him.⁽⁴⁾ Braithwaite brought a letter of introduction with him to General F.G. Middleton, the British Commander of the Canadian militia in the 1885 North West Rebellion. As soon as he arrived in Winnipeg, Braithwaite applied to join the North West Mounted Police. Accepted as recruit #1025, he was sent to the NWMP training school in Regina on May 7, 1884.⁽³⁾ After graduating, Braithwaite was assigned to the NWMP hospital service as a hospital Sergeant.

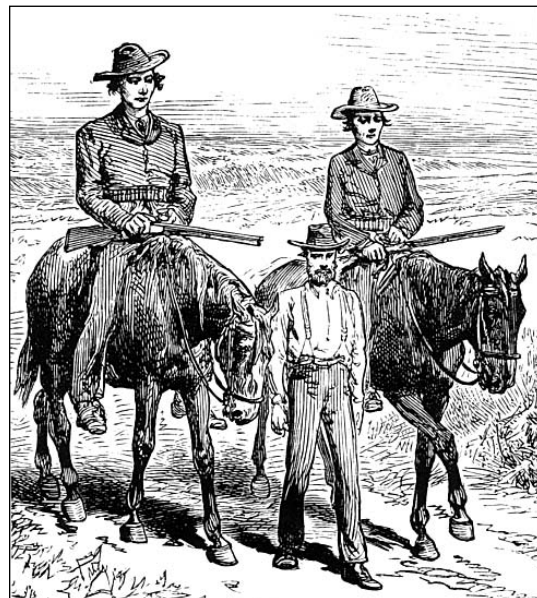
The NW Rebellion 1885

On March 18, 1885, immediately before the outbreak of hostilities in the North West, Colonel Irvine of the NWMP was sent with ninety-four men from Regina to protect the town of Prince Albert.⁽⁵⁾ Reluctant to go because of his truncated medical training, Staff Sergeant Braithwaite was pressed into action and accompanied the men as their “medical officer”. Several needed him.⁽⁶⁾ One day after his arrival in Prince Albert, Braithwaite was assigned to a relief group bound for Fort Carleton. On the way he treated one frozen foot with slow warming and twenty-two men – who were snow blinded – using tea leaves.

At Fort Carleton he found eight wounded men. They had been brought to the Fort from the Duck Lake massacre. The men were in a makeshift hospital, waiting to be evacuated to Prince Albert. The decision to move them was expedited when a mattress in the house caught fire. While removing one patient with a broken hip, the officer trying to help

Braithwaite pulled too hard and dislocated the broken hip. Another wounded patient was noted to have a bullet that had “run around the ribs but had not penetrated ... and the trade bullet dropped out”. A third casualty required a below-knee amputation back at Prince Albert. The injured patients were transported to Prince Albert on four sleighs. Braithwaite assisted the surgeon with the operation at the makeshift hospital.⁽⁷⁾ He remained there for the rest of the Rebellion.

Braithwaite’s last recorded action came during the final hours of the Battle of Batoche, where he saw Riel surrender. With the forty-seven day rebellion essentially over, the wounded men at Prince Albert were loaded onto a paddle wheeler and ferried up the South Saskatchewan River to the base hospital at Clark’s Landing (Saskatoon).⁽⁸⁾ When the medical services at Saskatoon were closed by Dr. Thomas Roddick on July 4, 1885, the last seventeen patients in the Saskatoon hospital were transferred by barge 1600 kilometers to Winnipeg.⁽⁹⁾



Riel being brought in, May 15, 1885 13-4

4. MacRae, Archibald O. *History of the Province of Alberta*, Volume II: 876-877.

3. Braithwaite, Edward A. “Early Days of the RNWMP,” page 45.

5. Turner, J.P. *The North-West Mounted Police: 1873-1893*, Volume 2: 100-101, 114, 274, Kings Printer 1950. Also see the CACHB 1: 2-8, February 1937. There were differences on the number of men sent. They ranged from 90-300 men.

6. Pocock, Geoffrey *Outrider of Empire: The Life and Adventures of Roger Pocock, 1865-1941*, pages 18-50, UofA Press (in process), 2007

7. Braithwaite, Edward A. “Early Days of the RNWMP,” pages 5-9.

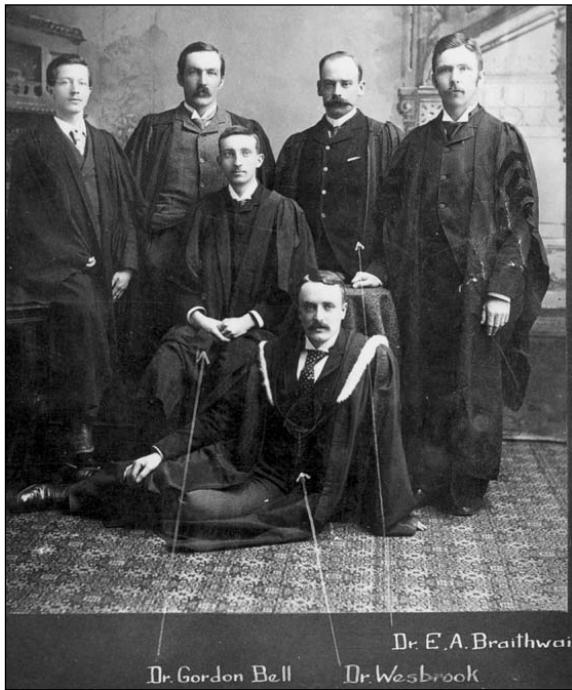
8. Braithwaite, Edward A. “The First Canadian Army Medical Corp: an addendum,” CACHB 4(4): 10, February, 1940.

9. Bergin, Darby *The Medical and Surgical History of the North West Rebellion of 1885*, pages 38-42, Lovell, 1886. Also see R. Lampard’s “Military Medicine and Medical Care in the North West Rebellions of 1870/71 and 1885,” in Part 2, for an estimate of the total number of wounded (316) plus the number of deaths (113) on both sides.

Braithwaite and Inspector Frank Dickens, the son of author Charles Dickens, escorted Riel to Regina for trial.⁽¹⁰⁾ Braithwaite commented on how lucid Riel was, and how he rarely carried a firearm. He remained in Regina until Riel was tried, found guilty, and hanged for treason.⁽¹¹⁾ After witnessing the Riel hanging in November 1885, Braithwaite was transferred to Coal Banks (Lethbridge). Two months later in January 1886 Dr. F.H. Mewburn arrived in Lethbridge from the Winnipeg General Hospital, as the first Galt Mine and NWMP surgeon. Braithwaite was transferred to Fort Macleod. Shortly afterward he developed the widely prevalent typhoid fever. More importantly, he survived.⁽¹²⁾

Medical School, again 1886-1890

By April of 1886, Braithwaite had been transferred to Fort Saskatchewan. One unidentified Edmonton doctor wrote Lt. Governor Dewdney asking if



Manitoba College of Medicine Graduating Class, 1890

Braithwaite was “registered”, noting “he is at present attending the police and has as far as I know, no qualifications at all, but is a pet of the Superintendent here”.⁽¹³⁾ The same month Braithwaite asked NWMP Commissioner Herchmer to interrupt his NWMP service contract, so he could finish his medical training at the new Manitoba Medical College. Braithwaite received his MD with the class of 1890. Such breaks in service while under contract were rare.⁽¹⁴⁾

Medicine in Edmonton as the Medical Officer of Health, Coroner, Railway Doctor 1892-1947

Dr. Braithwaite returned to Fort Saskatchewan/Edmonton, after his contract with the Force expired on April 6, 1892.⁽¹⁵⁾ The NWMP offered him a part-time contract which continued until 1911. Then Dr. Braithwaite was transferred to the “under special circumstances” list and was given the title of Honorary Surgeon to the RCMP. Braithwaite along with Dr. F.H. Mewburn, were the only two physicians to hold that title.⁽¹⁶⁾ Dr. Braithwaite kept his title until 1931. His total of forty-seven years and eight months in the NWMP/RNWMP/RCMP was the longest of any medical member and likely any member of the Force.

Dr. Braithwaite’s 1892 arrival in Edmonton was greeted with lukewarm enthusiasm. It corresponded with the new CPR-operated C&E railways arrival in Strathcona, on the south of the North Saskatchewan river. A few months later Dr. J. D. Harrison arrived and joined him in a loose partnership. It led to a strong friendship that lasted for decades. That same year (1892) Edmonton appointed Dr. Braithwaite as the Medical Officer of Health and a few years later as the Chief Medical Health Officer. He held that post until 1907. His starting salary was ten dollars per month.⁽¹⁷⁾ In 1907 the City hired their first full time Medical Officer of Health, Dr. T.H. Whitelaw.

In 1896 Dr. Braithwaite became one of the NWT/Alberta’s Coroners. He retained that post until 1921,

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10. Nicol, Eric *Dickens of the Mounted*. Letters to Emily, November 10, 1885, pages 262-263, M&S, 1989.
11. Braithwaite, Edward A. “Early Days of the RNWMP,” pages 26-27.
12. Braithwaite, Edward A. “Early Days of the RNWMP,” page 25.
13. Neatby, Hilda “The Medical Profession in the North-West Territories.” Saskatchewan History 2: 1-15, 1949. Reprinted in Part 2.
14. Beahen, William, Horrall, Stan *Red Coats on the Prairies, 1886-1900*, page 189, Centax, 1998. He was replaced by Dr. H.C. Wilson as noted in the Dr. H.C. Wilson profile.
15. MacRae, Archibald O. *History of the Province of Alberta*, Volume II: 876.
16. Jamieson, Heber C. Edmonton Journal, February 18, 1946. Corroborated in the obituary of Frank Hamilton Mewburn, CMAJ 20: 328, 1929.
17. Schartner, A. *Health Units of Alberta*, pages 31-32, HAA, 1980. Also see A.O. MacRae’s *History of the Province of Alberta*, Volume II: 877.

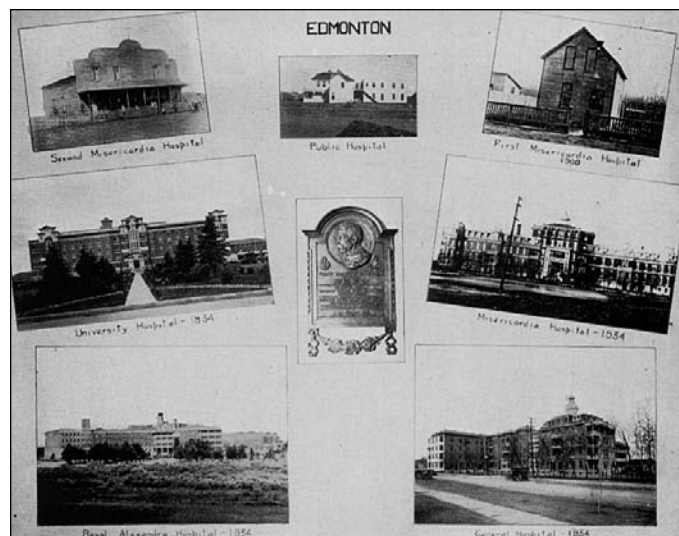
when every coroner tendered their resignation. All were accepted, except Braithwaite's. He stayed on and in 1926 became the Provincial Chief Coroner, a post he held for another twenty years.⁽¹⁸⁾ At the end of his career he claimed that he had presided over and performed about eight thousand inquests.⁽¹⁹⁾

When the Canadian Northern Railway reached Edmonton in 1905, Dr. Braithwaite became the Edmonton-based physician for the railway. At that time there were sixteen hospitals and twenty-three doctors between Winnipeg and Edmonton. Under Braithwaite's supervision there were no cases of typhoid fever during the construction period, but not so for the Grand Trunk Railway.⁽²⁰⁾ In 1912 he began teaching railway employees First Aid.⁽²¹⁾ Dr. Braithwaite maintained his association with the railway and its post-WWI successor the CNR, well into the 1920s.⁽²²⁾

Hospital Firsts 1896-1911

The earliest purpose built hospital in northern Alberta that has so far been identified, was the 1881 built Grey Nuns 80' x 40' hospital in St. Albert, nine miles northeast of Edmonton.⁽²³⁾ The arrival of the CPR Railway in Strathcona in 1891 settled the competition for growth between the two towns in favor of Edmonton and Strathcona. Foreseeing an burgeoning need, Braithwaite and five colleagues petitioned Bishop Grandin to build a Hospital in Edmonton in 1894.⁽²⁴⁾ The Grey Nuns opened the thirty-five bed Edmonton General Hospital (EGH) on August 6, 1895. It cost \$30,000. The combined population of Edmonton and Strathcona at that time was sixteen hundred.

Dr. Braithwaite performed the first operation at the hospital and remained on the Edmonton General Hospital Medical Board until at least 1899. That was long enough for it to undergo a formal hospital inspection for NWT Council funding grants by Dr. G.A. Kennedy in 1898. The report was favorable.



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Edmonton Hospitals from Early Medicine of Alberta by Heber C. Jamieson, 1947. Clockwise from UL. 2nd Misericordia, Public, 1st Misericordia, current Misericordia (1934), General (1934), RAH (1934), UAH (1934)

Edmonton's continued growth led to a petition for another hospital. The Edmonton Public or City Hospital opened in 1899 in a small log house. Braithwaite performed the first operation at the City Hospital. Dr. Braithwaite extended his string of firsts when he delivered the first baby at the Misericordia Maternity Hospital in 1900, admitted the first patient to the Misericordia General Hospital in 1906, and performed the first operation at the Strathcona Cottage Hospital in 1906.

In 1907 the Alexandra Hospital Board of Trustees were granted the title "Royal Alexandra". The City and the Royal Alexandra Hospitals agreed to merge and build a new hospital, which opened in 1911 on the Kingsway Avenue site.⁽²⁵⁾

Association's affairs and the Dominion Medical Council 1902-1924

In 1902 Drs. MacKay, McInnis, Wilson, Harrison, and Braithwaite formed the Northern Alberta Medical

18. Braithwaite, Edward A. Dr. Braithwaite's Hospital Inspection and Coroner's reports were included in the Department of Public Health Annual Reports from 1926-1946. For the Duty of Coroners see the AMB 2: 7, January 1937.

19. Braithwaite, Edward A. Dr. Braithwaite Claimant for Many Service Records. Edmonton Journal February 18, 1946.

20. Braithwaite, Edward A. "Early Days of the RNWMP," pages 42-43.

21. Wilson, Donald R. "The Order of St. John Ambulance in Medicine," in Alberta: Historical Reflections, pages 64-68, AMF 1993.

22. Blue, John *Alberta Past and Present*, Volume II: 340-341, Pioneer Historical Publishing, 1924.

23. Jamieson, Heber C. *Early Medicine in Alberta, the first 75 years*, pages 21, 40, 89, AMA, 1947. Jamieson states that the first hospital in Northern Alberta was built in December 1881 in St. Albert, by the Grey Nuns for \$10,000. Janet Ross-Kerr in *Prepared to Care*, UofA, 1998, credits the Grey Nuns as providing in-patient care in Alberta as early as 1870. Her conclusions were supported by Theresa Castonguay in *A Leap of Faith, The Grey Nuns Ministries*, Volume 1, pages 46-47, Grey Nuns, 1999. The 1881 Catholic hospital was moved to the new Edmonton General Hospital site, when the hospital was built in 1895.

24. Braithwaite, Edward A., Letter to His Lordship Bishop Grandin, April 25, 1894, Grey Nuns Archives, Edmonton.

25. Braithwaite, Edward A. "Early Days of the RNWMP," page 45.

Association. Although the minutes for the 1904-1906 years are missing,⁽²⁶⁾ Dr. Braithwaite probably was the President during one of those two years. The Association became the Edmonton Academy of Medicine circa 1912. In 1922 Dr. Braithwaite and Harrison were made the first Honorary members of the Edmonton Academy of Medicine.

Following the establishment of the Alberta Medical Association in 1906, Dr. Braithwaite was elected to the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. He became the Vice-President of the College in 1909/10 and the President in 1910/11. Along with Drs. Brett and Kennedy, Dr. Braithwaite took an active interest in the proposal to establish the Western Canadian Medical Federation, to examine and register new physicians.

80 Union Avenue, Montreal

(4) 26th January 1910

My dear Powell,

Strictly entre nous unless you can give any good and sufficient reasons for doing otherwise, I have practically decided not to seek Federal legislation this session. I am so delayed and hampered by the French on the one hand and the B.C. people on the other, that it will be impossible to get any suggestions they may have to offer straightened out into proper phraseology in time to get the Bill in shape for presentation. The French almost insist that the candidate for the Dom. licence shall have a licence from one of the Provinces. That means of course two examinations for every one coming up. They think that in that way "irregulars" will be blocked. I have shown them a much simpler plan, namely that every candidate must come with a certificate from the registrar of his province to the effect that he has complied with all the conditions and regulations necessary to obtain a licence in his own province excepting of course the examination. It is two weeks since I submitted that, or words to that effect, but have had no reply from Normand and Simard who are still armed with full powers to represent the Council re the Bill.

Then I can get absolutely nothing from Fagan. I don't believe they have taken the first step to have a meeting of their Council. Tunstall has written over, but there was nothing in his letter of any value. A patient of mine, who has just returned from the Coast, tells me that he overheard two doctors discussing the question of Dom. Regis. and one stopped the argument suddenly by remarking that "he wished Roddick and his Bill were both in hell."

Now I don't want such brutes as that to say that I rushed things and did not give them a chance of being heard. My plan would be to get everything in readiness for the meeting of the C.M.A. in June — have all the Councils and profession of the nine provinces well represented — in that way one gets a proper hearing, and then by that time all the provinces with the exception perhaps of B.C. will have secured the necessary enabling legislation.

Let me hear from you soon.

Yours faithfully,
T. G. Roddick.

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MCC Letter from Dr. Roddick to Dr. Powell, January, 1910

When the Saskatchewan Medical Council faltered in their support for the Western Canadian Federation concept, Drs. Brett, Kennedy, and Braithwaite attended their next meeting in Saskatoon in 1910. Facing a stonewall of resistance, the three asked for a temporary adjournment. Then they sent Dr. Kennedy back into the meeting with "power to act" according to Braithwaite. Kennedy took the position that if the Saskatchewan physicians would not agree to support the western federation, he would inform Dr. Thomas Roddick of their withdrawal of support. Roddick was the longstanding proponent of a national Dominion Medical Council. The Saskatchewan Council acquiesced shortly thereafter.⁽²⁷⁾

The proposal for a western provincial medical licensing federation was born out of frustration for the lack of national support for Dr. Roddick's 1899 proposal for a Dominion Medical Council. In 1907 the prairie medical associations were still facing the same problems – reciprocity, equivalency, registration, and examination competency – as they had since the issue re-surfaced during the Riel Rebellion of 1885.⁽²⁸⁾ Roddick was the Field Surgeon in command of the NorthWest Rebellion hospital and regimental medical services and knew the problem first hand.⁽²⁹⁾

A CMA Committee was struck to meet with Dr. Roddick in 1910. By 1912 all the necessary association and legislative approvals supporting the Canada Medical "Roddick" Act were in place. The need for a separate western federation to examine and license new physicians no longer existed.⁽³⁰⁾ The Dominion Medical Council was appointed in November 1912. Braithwaite sat on the Dominion Medical Council Board for eleven years, starting in 1913. He replaced Dr. G.A. Kennedy after Kennedy's unexpected death in 1913.

In August 1912 the Annual CMA Convention was held in Alberta for the second time. Dr. Braithwaite indicated that he was "Chairman of Proceedings" at the Edmonton meeting. He was, in part. Braithwaite

26. Letts, Harry *The Edmonton Academy of Medicine, a History*. Edmonton Academy, pages 1-2, 12, 1986. There may also have been no meetings. Also see H.C. Jamieson's "The Medical History of Edmonton" published for the 32nd annual Academy dinner, December 6, 1933, page 2.
27. Braithwaite, Edward A. Letter to Dr. George R. Johnson, Registrar, June 19, 1942. Dr. G.R. Johnson Fonds, File 20-23, M600, file 2, Glenbow.
28. Bergin, Darby *The Medical and Surgical History of the Canadian North-West Rebellion of 1885*, pages 8-9.
29. Lampard, Robert For more on the registration issue see the profiles of Drs. R.G. Brett, G.A. Kennedy, J.D. Lafferty, H.G. Mackid and J.S. McEachern; "The CMA Convention of 1912" and "Military Medicine and Medical Care in the North West Rebellions of 1870/71 and 1885" in Part 2.
30. Kerr, Robert B. *The History of the Medical Council of Canada*, pages 10-13, 20-23, MCC, 1979. Also see H.C. Jamieson's *Early Medicine in Alberta*, pages 64 and opp. page 65 (photo).

“DOCTORS AT SMOKER DISCUSS MATTERS SEDATE AND FRIVOLOUS, WHILE OLD-TIMERS RECOUNT THE STRUGGLES OF GENERATION AGO – AFTERNOON SESSION TAKEN UP WITH INTERESTING PAPERS

Toasting the Guests

The Dominion Medical Council was toasted by Dr. George Kennedy of Macleod, who came with the North West Mounted Police to this country, 35 years ago. The toast was to be responded to by Dr. Adami of Montreal and Dr. Chown of Winnipeg.

Public Health Department

Dr. Powell of Ottawa revived an old favorite with the medical association. He resolved, and everyone else agreed, that a petition be addressed by the Association imploring the privy council of Canada, the premier and the cabinet ministers concerned, to establish a proper department to be concerned only with the public health of Canada.”

CMA Convention, Edmonton Journal, August 12, 1912

and his wife chaired and organized several social proceedings.⁽³¹⁾ The Chairman of the Convention was UofA President H.M. Tory.

The CMA President in 1911/12, Calgarian Dr. H.G. Mackid, was the first Albertan to be so honored. At the end of Dr. Mackid's 1912 presidential retirement speech, he accepted the motion from Dr. Forin to appoint Dr. T.G. Roddick as the Honorary President of the CMA for the rest of his life, in recognition of his years of work towards the formation of the Dominion Council. A standing ovation followed. Two years later Dr. Braithwaite was returning from England and discovered Dr. Roddick was on the same ship. Dr. Roddick had just received his Knighthood for his contributions to Canadian Medicine.

Inspector of Hospitals 1920-1938:

In 1920 Dr. Braithwaite assumed another of Dr. G.A. Kennedy's mantles. Dr. Kennedy had been the NWT Inspector of Hospitals until 1905.⁽³²⁾ Dr. Braithwaite became one of the provincial hospital inspectors and in 1920 he took over the provincial responsibility from Dr. J.D. Lafferty. Braithwaite's responsibility was

to inspect all approved hospitals in the province. A favorable report meant the hospital could continue to receive the annual government grant. He also reviewed weekly, all operative death reports in the province.

After one unfavorable visit to the sub-hospital in Blackie in 1930, the hospital was closed and replaced by a District Nurse. On a visit to High River, Braithwaite noted patients who were “up and about” were required to use the outdoor privy. A visit to the outhouse required a tortuous trip through the kitchen and a walk to the rear of the hospital.⁽³³⁾ The unhygienic practice was changed, immediately. Dr. Harvey

Agnew the father of Hospital Administration in Canada, thought Dr. Braithwaite did a commendable job raising hospital standards.⁽³⁴⁾ Braithwaite held his hospital inspector's post until 1938, when he relinquished it to Dr. A.C. McGugan.



Dr. E.A. Braithwaite, Edmonton Journal, February 18, 1946

31. Braithwaite, Ernest A. “Early Days of the RNWMP,” page 45. Mrs. Braithwaite hosted a garden party on the Braithwaite's lawn on Third Street, August 13, 1912. The program for the 45th CMA annual meeting in Edmonton August 10-14, 1912 did not list Dr. Braithwaite or a Committee of Proceedings. The Convention Committee Chairman was the President of the UofA H.M. Tory, Ph.D. Tory's position was confirmed in the Edmonton Daily Bulletin and the Edmonton Journal of August 13, 1912, and in the convention program.

Dr. Braithwaite was the toastmaster at the August 13, 1912 smoker. The toasts were an interesting reflection of the times. Words of appreciation were sent to Dr. Roddick. Drs. G.D. Stanley and H. George proposed toasts to Drs. Harrison and McInnis, as the Old Timers at the convention. Hon. Frank Oliver gave the reply from the Old Timers.

32. Bow, Malcolm R., Cook, F.T. “The History of Department of Public Health of Alberta,” CPHJ 26: 385-387, 1935 and *The History, Administration, Organization and Work of the Provincial Department of Health and Boards of Health*, pages 3-4, Kings Printer 1947.

33. Knupp, L. *In the Spirit of Good Medicine*, page 13, High River Health Care, 1990.

34. Agnew, Harry A. *Canadian Hospitals, 1920-1970*, page 81, 1974.

Early Days of the RNWMP as recorded in 1941/42

The AMA Registrar Dr. G. R. Johnson, finally persuaded Dr. Braithwaite to write his recollections. Early Days of the RNWMP was finished in late 1941. Dr. Braithwaite was eighty-three. The forty-eight page memoir focused primarily on Braithwaite's NWMP years and covered his involvement in medical progress on the prairies before 1905. Some highlights follow.

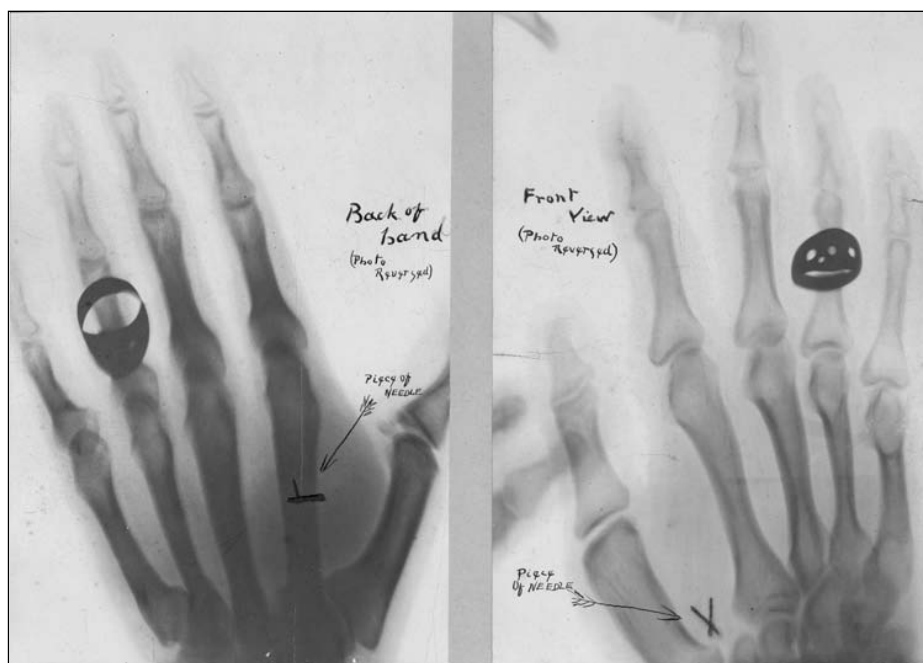
In 1890 Braithwaite as the anesthetist, watched as Drs. Mewburn and Kennedy operated on NWMP Constable Phillips in Fort Macleod for an un-united osteomyelitis of his leg.⁽³⁵⁾

Shortly after starting his Edmonton practice in 1892, Dr. Braithwaite decided to perform an ovariectomy (wedge resection or removal of the ovary) on a patient with epilepsy. He consulted with Drs. H.L. McInnis and H.C. Wilson, who then assisted him with the operation. Given the year (1892) it would have been performed in St. Albert where some operations were performed.⁽³⁶⁾ During the operation the

surgeons could not agree which tissue was the ovary. They closed the abdomen without finishing the operation.

Dr. Braithwaite then contacted Dr. R. G. Brett who said, "send the patient to Banff". Braithwaite accompanied the patient to Banff and assisted Dr. Brett with the re-operation. It confirmed Braithwaite's original impression; that he had identified the ovarian tissue correctly. There was no comment about the success of the procedure but there was an acknowledgment that Brett was one of most experienced and reputable surgeons in the North West Territories. Thereafter, Braithwaite was known as "Uncle Ernie" to Brett's two sons.⁽³⁷⁾

Shortly after diphtheria anti-toxin became available, Braithwaite examined a patient at St. Albert who he thought had a diphtheria pseudomembrane. The patient was given the new vaccine. Braithwaite returned the next day with Dr. H.C. Wilson. The patient had recovered in dramatic fashion. The membrane had gone. Both were impressed.⁽³⁸⁾ On another occasion in St. Albert, he performed a mastoidecto-



Dr. Braithwaite's First X-ray showing a piece of needle, 1906

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35. Johnson, Alex

Lethbridge: Its Doctors, Dentists and Drug Stores, pages 6, 9, 24, 41, Occasional Publication #24, Lethbridge Historical Society, 1991. The profiles of Drs. F.H. Mewburn and G.A. Kennedy discuss the two operations and the result.

36. Ross-Kerr, Janet

Prepared to Care, pages 3-6, UofA, 1998. Sister Therese Castonguay noted in *A Leap of Faith: The Grey Nuns Ministries in Western and Northern Canada*, Volume 1, page 47, The Grey Nuns, 1999, that surgical operations were not unusual.

37. Braithwaite, Edward A. "Early Days of the RNWMP," pages 38-39.

38. Braithwaite, Edward A. "Early Days of the RNWMP," handwritten two page addendum, dated January 15, 1942.

my on an ear using a sharpened spike and a carpenter's mallet.⁽³⁹⁾ But when Dr. H.C. Wilson asked Dr. Braithwaite to consult on a physician patient of his, Dr. Potvin, the patient refused, saying he was not going to be seen by “that horse Doctor”.⁽⁴⁰⁾

As a provincial coroner, the police asked Braithwaite to reinvestigate a murder fifty miles north of Edmonton. Apparently the coroner had not examined the body before the burial. During the exhumation, one digger yelled, “Jump, Braithwaite”. The sister of the victim had a gun leveled at him. After sharing the reasons for the dig with her, she relaxed. They did not tell her they were taking the head to Edmonton for further examination. There they discovered the skull had been hit three times by bullets. At the murder trial Braithwaite was accused of being drunk during the post-mortem. He denied the allegation but did admit to having a toddy after the dig.⁽⁴¹⁾

Later the two partners Drs. Harrison and Braithwaite were called to Stony Plain to assess a patient with a depressed skull fracture. They were missing the necessary instruments, so Braithwaite anesthetized the patient and Harrison used a gimlet and chisel to elevate the flap of skull bone. At the critical moment the patient stopped breathing. Harrison asked for “just another thirty seconds”. He got it. When the last fragment was elevated the patient took a deep breath. One month later the patient was observed walking down Edmonton streets on crutches.⁽⁴²⁾

Not all of Braithwaite's cases were so successful. When he gave the anesthetic for a tonsillectomy for a patient who had just developed the 1918 flu, the patient expired five minutes later. Fortunately there were few similar flu stories.⁽⁴³⁾

In 1906 Dr. Braithwaite became the first physician in Edmonton to buy and use an x-ray machine.⁽⁴⁴⁾ By 1908 he had purchased his third machine which he later sold to the Edmonton General Hospital.

Fun and Family:

Outside medicine Dr. Braithwaite was a 32nd degree Mason and the Grandmaster for the three Prairie Provinces plus the Yukon in 1903. He enjoyed golf and introduced the G.A. Kennedy Golf Trophy, for medal play at the 1937 AMA Golf Tournament. In his presentation he reflected on the great respect he held for Dr. George Kennedy.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Dr. Braithwaite married Jane Emma Anderson of Edmonton November 30, 1892.⁽⁴⁶⁾ She passed away in 1914. In 1915 he married Ruth Somersall of Vancouver. There was no reference in his “Early Days” to any family.

After his death on December 7, 1949, the City of Edmonton acknowledged the quality and duration of his contributions to medicine, by naming a park after Dr. Braithwaite at the corner of University Avenue and 112th Street.⁽⁴⁷⁾

In 1953 the Geographic Names Board approved the naming of Mt Braithwaite, 2134 m (7000 ft), 20 km



The Braithwaite Park Plaque, unveiled in the Spring of 1958

13-9

39. McGugan, Angus C. “The Drama of Medicine in Alberta,” *AMB* 20(3): 26, 28-29, 34-35, August 1955.

40. Braithwaite, Edward A. “Early Days of the RNWMP,” page 46. The story was repeated in H.C. Jamieson's *Early Medicine in Alberta* page 47, AMA, 1947 and the “Early Medical History of Edmonton,” *CMAJ* 29: 431-435, 1933.

41. Braithwaite, Edward A. “Early Days of the RNWMP,” pages 39-40.

42. Braithwaite, Edward A. “Medical Pioneering in Alberta. Unforgettable incidents,” *CACHB* 7: 13, May 1942.

43. Braithwaite, Edward A. “Early Days of the RNWMP,” handwritten two page addendum dated January 12, 1942.

44. Jamieson, Heber C. Radiographs: the First X-rays to be Taken in Edmonton. Jamieson Papers Accession #81-104, Manuscript Group 25/1/2 Box 4 #217, UofA, 1981. Braithwaite said he bought the first, second and third x-ray machines in Edmonton, as noted in his letter to Dr. G.R. Johnson, June 19, 1942.

45. Braithwaite, Ernest A. “The G.A. Kennedy Memorial Golf Cup,” *AMB* 2: 3-4, 1937.

46. MacRae Archibald O. *History of the Province of Alberta*, Volume II: 877.

47. Moir, Alex “The Man Made History,” in *Gateway City* pages 40-42, Fifth House, 2001. The plaque was donated by the Edmonton Academy of Medicine. The dedication ceremony and photo appeared in, “The City to Erect Memorial Honoring Pioneering Doctor”, *Edmonton Journal*, December 12, 1957

(12 miles) SW of Grande Cache, after Dr. Braithwaite. It is near Mt deVeber and the Alberta/BC boundary. During Alberta's centennial year, Dr. Braithwaite was named one of Alberta's 100 Physicians of the Century.

Related Profiles: MacKay, Lafferty, Brett, Kennedy, Mewburn, H.C. Wilson, Mackid, Rankin, Jamieson, Bow

Related Perspectives: Military Medicine and Medical Care in the North-West Rebellions of 1870/71 and 1885, The Medical Profession in the North-West Territories, The Second CMA Convention (Edmonton 1912)

Key Words: NW Rebellion, NWMP Doctors, Medical Council of Canada, Coroner, MOH



13-10

Mrs. E.A. Braithwaite at the unveiling of the Braithwaite Park Memorial, Spring 1958, with (L to R) John Easton and Drs. Hal Richards and E.B. Quehl of the Edmonton Academy of Medicine. The UofA Normal School (now Corbett Hall), is in the background.