



Doing Good: The Life of Toronto's General Hospital

J.T.H. Connor

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A history of Toronto's general hospital offers a window on a broader history of Upper Canada and Ontario over the last two centuries. In this lively and authoritative account, J.T.H. Connor traces the hospital's two-hundred-year evolution, as its mandate to 'do good' forced constant adjustment to changing social, medical, and government attitudes.

Doing Good presents the hospital's history in three phases – roughly speaking, the first and second halves of the nineteenth century, and the twentieth century. From its conception in 1797 to the mid-1850s – it did not actually acquire a home until 1819 nor occupy it until 1829 – it functioned as a charitable institution, catering to the sick poor. It acted initially as a clearing station for sick immigrants; it later was deeply affected by political events and became embroiled in the medical turmoil of Toronto in the 1840s and early 1850s. In the second era, from the mid-1850s, it was a public charity, receiving stable government funding and constructing a new home in eastern Toronto. By the 1870s, it was winning praise as a model hospital.

In the twentieth century, it early on established close links with the University of Toronto, building a vast and up-to-date new facility adjacent to the university, which opened in 1913. Its international reputation as an academic hospital grew over the decades to include a high profile in research, most notably in cancer and medical technology. By the 1960s the institution was being run as a public hospital, and the late 1990s saw its absorption into a hospital mega-corporation – the University Health Network – along with three other nearby hospitals.

This work is the most comprehensive analysis of any Canadian hospital or health care institution yet to appear. Using trustees' minutes, medical journals, newspapers, and government reports, along with correspondence, photographs, and reminiscences of trustees, nurses, doctors, and patients, Connor offers acute observation and detailed analysis, as well as compelling character studies and revealing anecdotes. Broad in scope and meticulously executed, *Doing Good* brings vividly to life the day-to-day routines, the behind-the-scenes intrigue, and the people and politics of a great urban hospital.

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