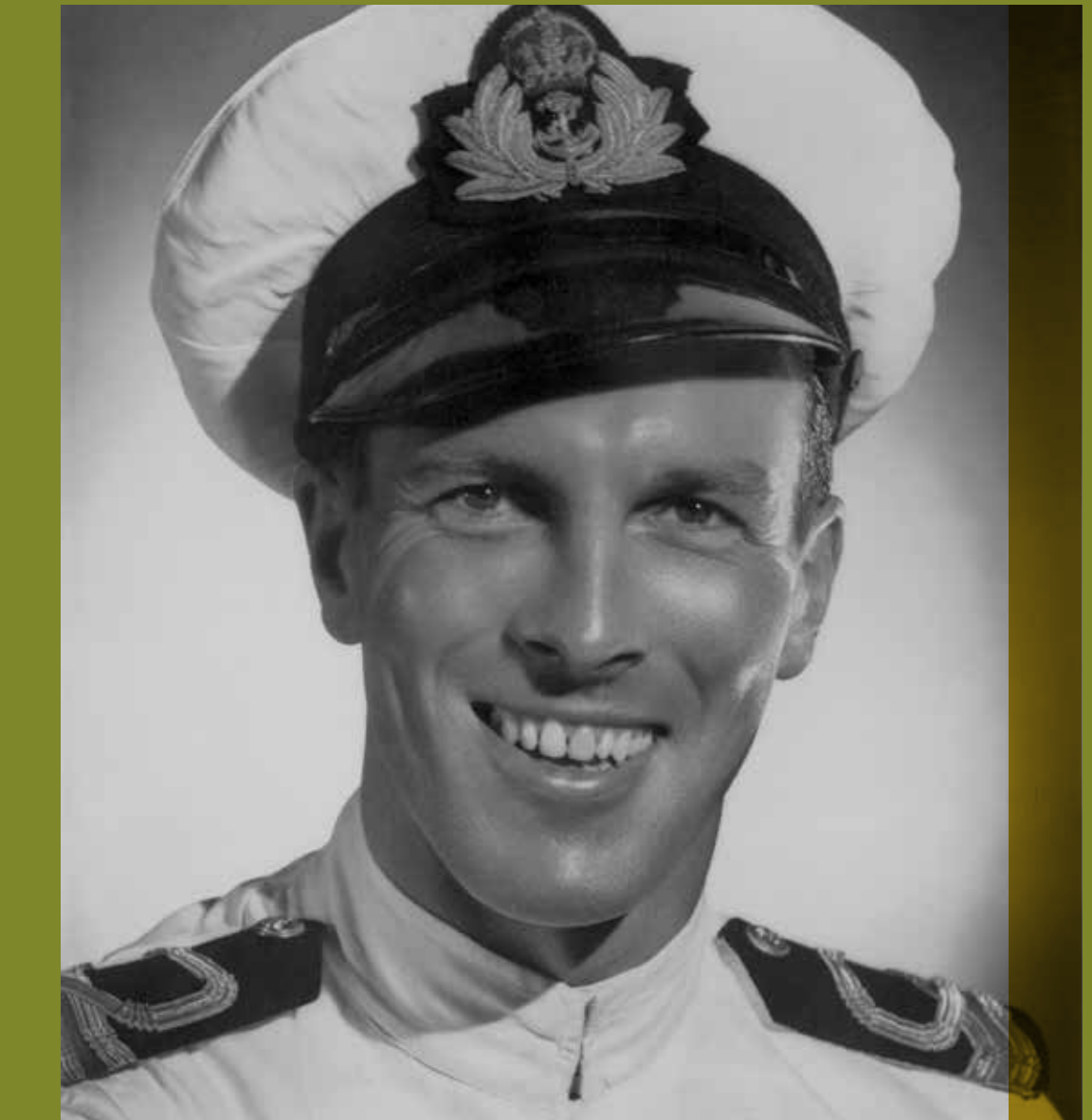


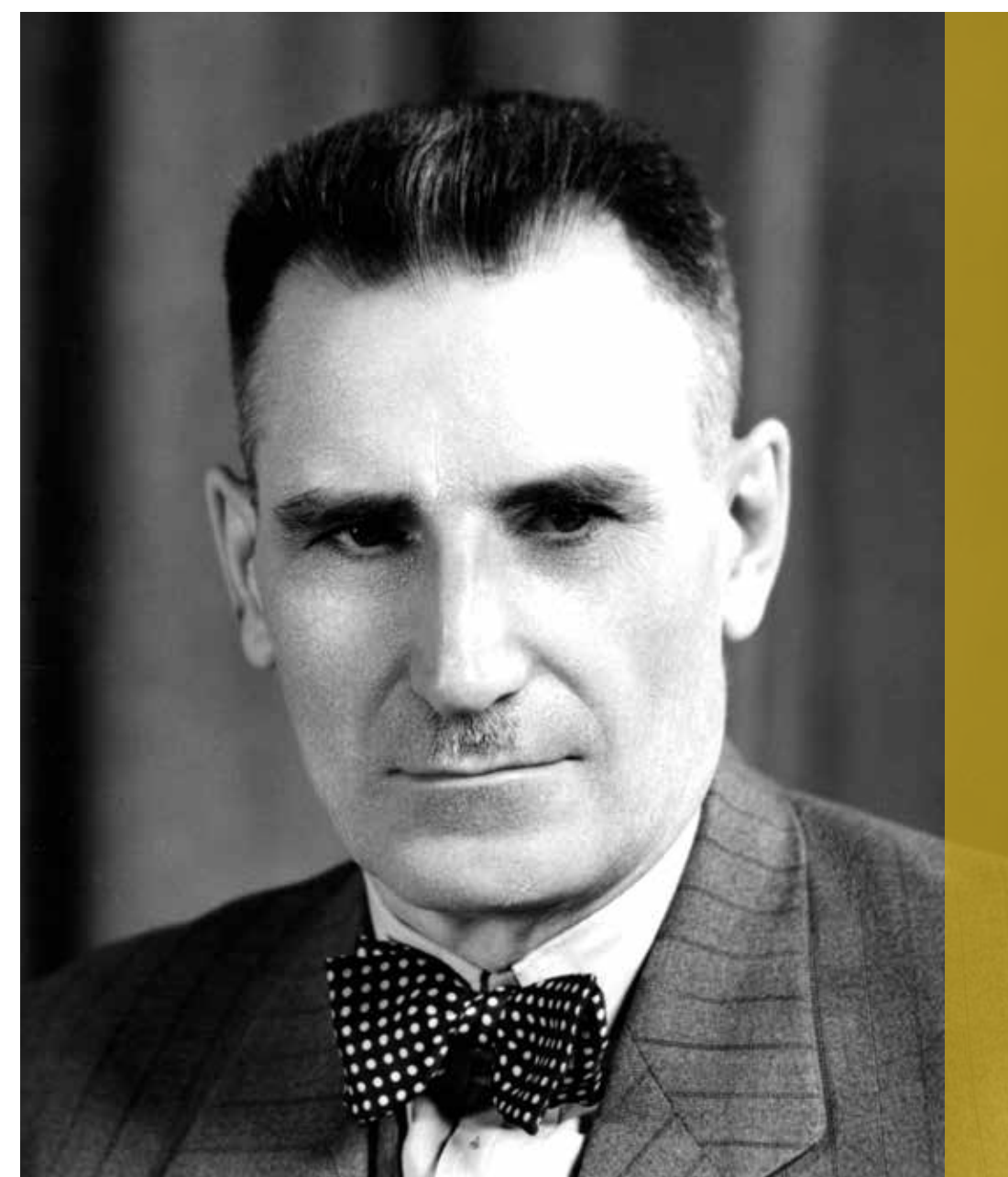
EMPRESS HOSPITAL (1942-1982)



Empress Hospital (no date). This hospital served Empress and the surrounding area from 1942 to 1982.



Lt. Surgeon Dr. John MacDonald Fraser. Dr. Fraser served as the physician at the Empress Hospital from 1962 to 1978.



Esplanade Archives, 0322.0011.

Dr. Dan MacCharles (no date). Dr. MacCharles served as the doctor for the Empress area from 1918-1927.

The Empress Hospital opened in 1942 at the height of World War Two. It was a modern nineteen bed facility that was, for many years, the largest hospital within a 160 kilometre radius. It was Empress's second hospital – the first was a nursing home built in 1914 that transitioned to a cottage hospital in 1918 under Dr. Dan MacCharles.

Dr. A.K. McNeill, MD, MSC. Dr. McNeill was the main physician in Empress from 1926 to 1962 and led the campaign for the construction of a new hospital.



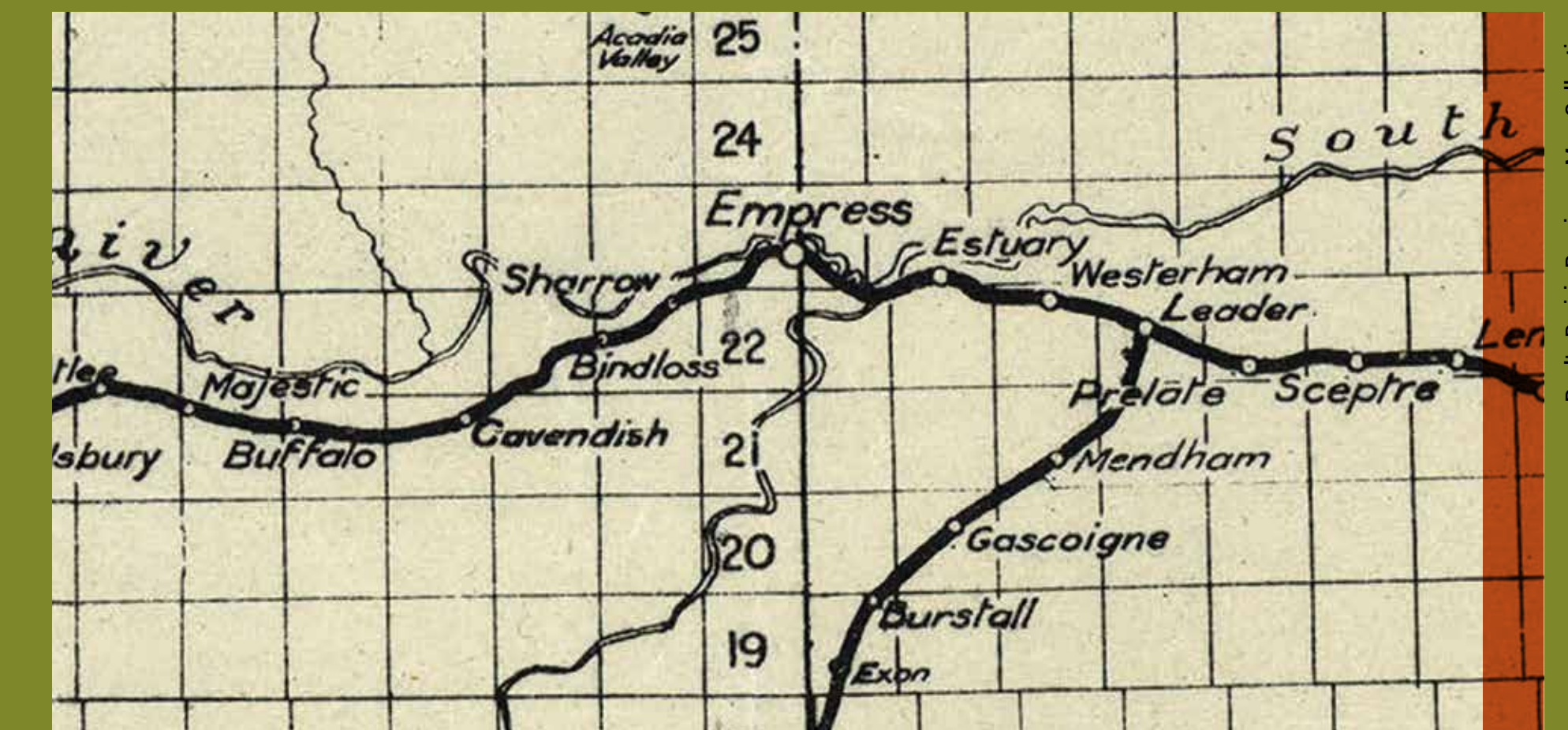
Painting by J. Nichol. Courtesy Village of Empress.

Dr. A.K. McNeill took over in 1926 and became the area's primary doctor for the next thirty-six years (Dr. MacCharles continued to work in the community as well until 1927). It was Dr. McNeill who began the campaign for a new hospital in the 1930s.

Fundraising for the new \$25,000 hospital was a daunting task, as no government funding was used. To support this building project, local community groups and individuals fundraised for many years, while hospital staff took significant pay cuts during the difficult years of the Great Depression. Opening in January 1942, the Empress Hospital was an expression of hope and confidence in the community's future. Dr. McNeill, who played such a large role in the establishment of the new hospital, continued to work there until his death in 1962, at which time Dr. John Fraser took over as primary physician.

The legacy of health care at Empress Hospital extended interprovincially. As Empress was the closest town for many small communities in western Saskatchewan, patients were routinely brought in from across the provincial boundary on the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The Empress Hospital served the area for forty years until a new hospital was built in 1982. With the leadership of exceptional doctors, dedicated nursing staff and skilled support teams, the hospital was a focal point for the Empress community and a beacon of wellness and healthcare for the region.



Canadian Pacific Railway Western Lines Map, 1928. Patients were sent to Empress for health care from many communities along the Canadian Pacific Railway, including many across the border in Saskatchewan.



Dr. MacCharles (second from left) standing with a group in front of Canadian Pacific Railway Locomotive 2850 (no date).



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