

The Toronto Hospital for Sick Children's Christmas Appeals to 1926

The Sweetest of All Charities

Purpose and Scope: This social philately exhibit illustrates the messaging and printed material used by the Hospital for Sick Children in its annual Christmas fundraising appeals, including campaign booklets and letters, illustrated covers, and donation receipt post cards, until 1926 when the Hospital discontinued the use of private order post cards.

Background: Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children started out in a rented two-storey house on Avenue Street in 1875. Its founders, a Ladies' Committee led by Elizabeth McMaster, had a vision of a Christian charity run by women that would provide good nursing for sick children.

In 1883, newspaper magnate John Ross Robertson, responding to a request by the Ladies' Committee, funded construction of a Lakeside Home on the island (*shown at right*), where many of the Hospital's patients would convalesce over the summer months.

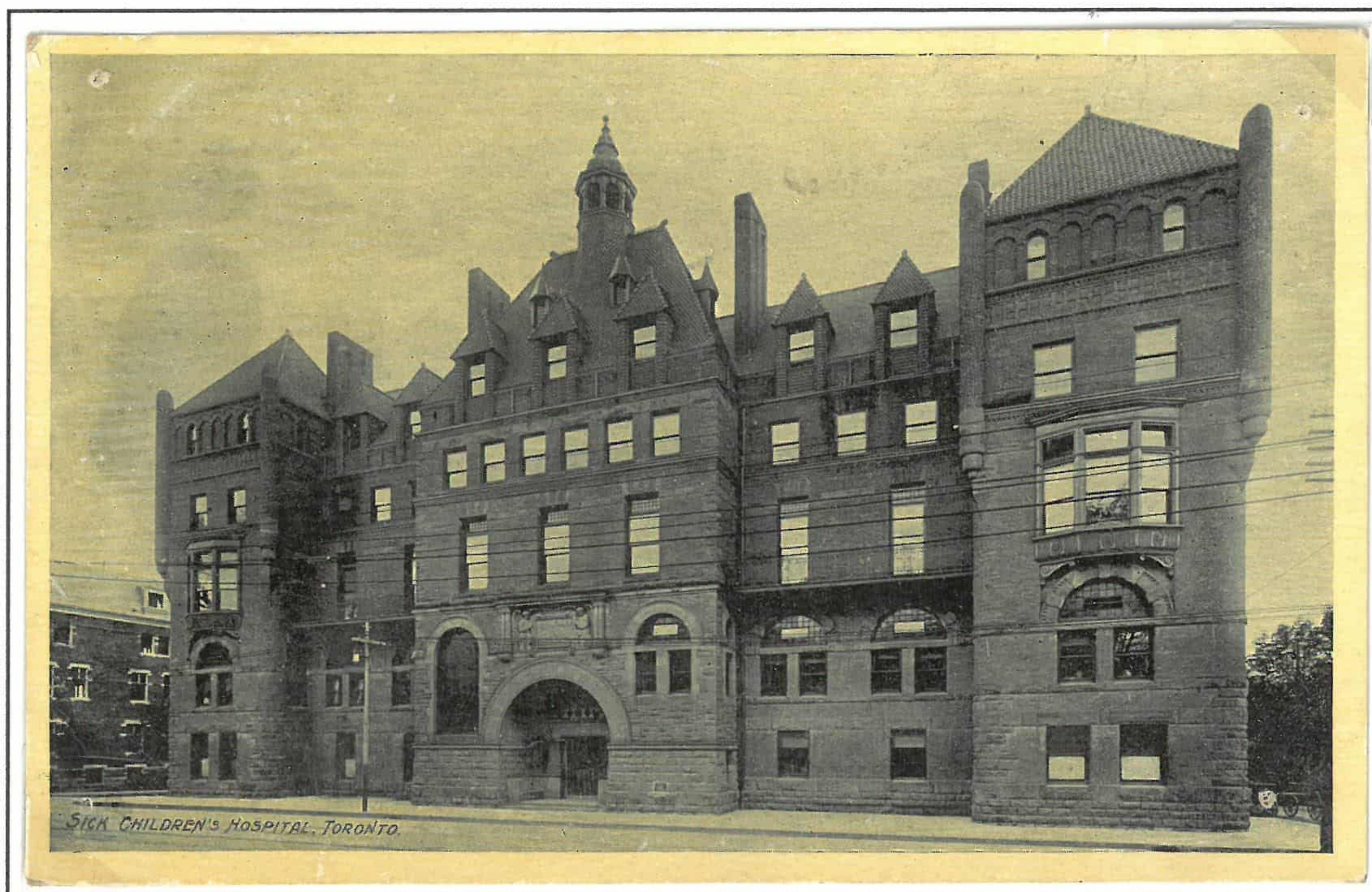
Robertson formed a Board of Trustees to run the Lakeside Home, and in 1891 the Ladies' Committee surrendered financial and governing responsibility of the Hospital to the Trustees amid tensions between Robertson and McMaster.

In 1891, the Hospital moved to its fifth location, a magnificent new building on College Street (*shown below*), where it operated until it relocated to its current site on University Avenue in 1951.

All children in Ontario in need of treatment were admitted regardless of their parents' ability to pay. Although funded in part by government grants and paying patients, in its early years the Hospital solicited and relied heavily on public donations.



Lakeside Home for Children on Toronto Island c1908, Henry Garner (Leicester, England) Living Picture Post Card series, divided back, halftone printing. Imported by A. H. Cooper, Toronto.



Hospital building on College Street c1909, Henry Garner (Leicester, England) Living Picture Post Card series, divided back, halftone printing. Imported by A. H. Cooper, Toronto.

Social history: This exhibit highlights how messaging and images in the Hospital's annual Christmas appeals changed over time to reflect a changing society as well as the transformation of the Hospital from a *Home* for ailing children founded on religious principles to a secular and scientific *Hospital* for the treatment of sick children that embraced new technology and medical theory.

Postal history: This exhibit is the first significant assembly of the Hospital's early mailed fundraising material, encompassing both appeals and acknowledgement of donations. Supplemented by personal research at the Hospital's archives, analysis of the material has enabled identification of varieties and different printings of private order post cards as well as new insights into the scope of donations. Detailed census information is included for all private order post cards, ranging from unique to at most 17 examples recorded.

Plan of the exhibit

1. Christmas spirit
2. Fundraising appeals
 - 2.1 Booklets and illustrated covers
 - 2.2 Appeal letters
3. Thanking donors
 - 3.1 Early acknowledgement post cards
 - 3.2 Private order post cards
 - 3.3 Transition to regular issue post cards

Historical text

Philatelic and related text

Auxiliary text

Items that are the **only recorded example** are boxed in red

Copies are reduced to 75%

Census numbers are based a comprehensive survey by exhibitor.

1 Christmas spirit

John Ross Robertson, founder of the *Toronto Evening Telegram*, gave most of his life's fortune to the Hospital, and served as Chairman of its Board of Trustees until his death in 1918.

He visited the Hospital weekly, sometimes daily, throughout his life, and every year dressed up as Santa Claus and drove a sleigh full of toys, pulled by a pony, into the wards.



John Ross Robertson as he appeared in the wards of the Hospital on Christmas Eve 1912. This was the 20th year in which he played Santa for the children. Original photo from estate of a former Hospital woodworker.

The Hospital's benefactor was a master of communication



Copyrighted. A. H. Cooper, Toronto

Land of the Maple

Interior Sick
Children's
Hospital,
Toronto

Santa visits the wards. Divided back, c1907. Published by A. H. Cooper, Toronto. Printing method: halftone sepia view with colour lithography.

Robertson recognized the importance of accessible communication in fundraising campaigns. His primary strategies were to tell about the Hospital's work in relatable story form and to illustrate its reports.

He had a photographer take "Before and After" photos of cases of club feet and cleft palate ("hare-lip"). The daily activities of nurses and children on the wards were photographed and illustrated.

These images appeared in appeal booklets and on letters, envelopes, and receipt post cards.

If the Hospital is to Continue Its Great Work it Must Appeal to Your Pocket Book as well as to Your Heart.

\$2,000 will name a cot and maintain it in perpetuity.

\$100 maintains a cot for a year.

\$500 names and maintains a cot in The Lakeside Home.

Please use this form:—

"I Give, Devise and Bequeath to The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto," the sum of

The incorporated name of the Hospital is "The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto."

YOUR DOLLAR MAY BE A DOOR OF HOPE TO SOMEBODY'S CHILD



TWO LITTLE FRIENDS.

It is easy to open the addressed envelope sent to you—enclose a dollar with your name, affix a 2c stamp and post the letter.

Open your purse strings to the Hospital's appeal that it may keep open its doors to the suffering children.

There were 441 in-patients from 267 places outside of Toronto in 1910.

Every sick child of poor parents in your county is treated free.

Let Your Dollars be Messages of Mercy to the Suffering Little Children of Ontario.

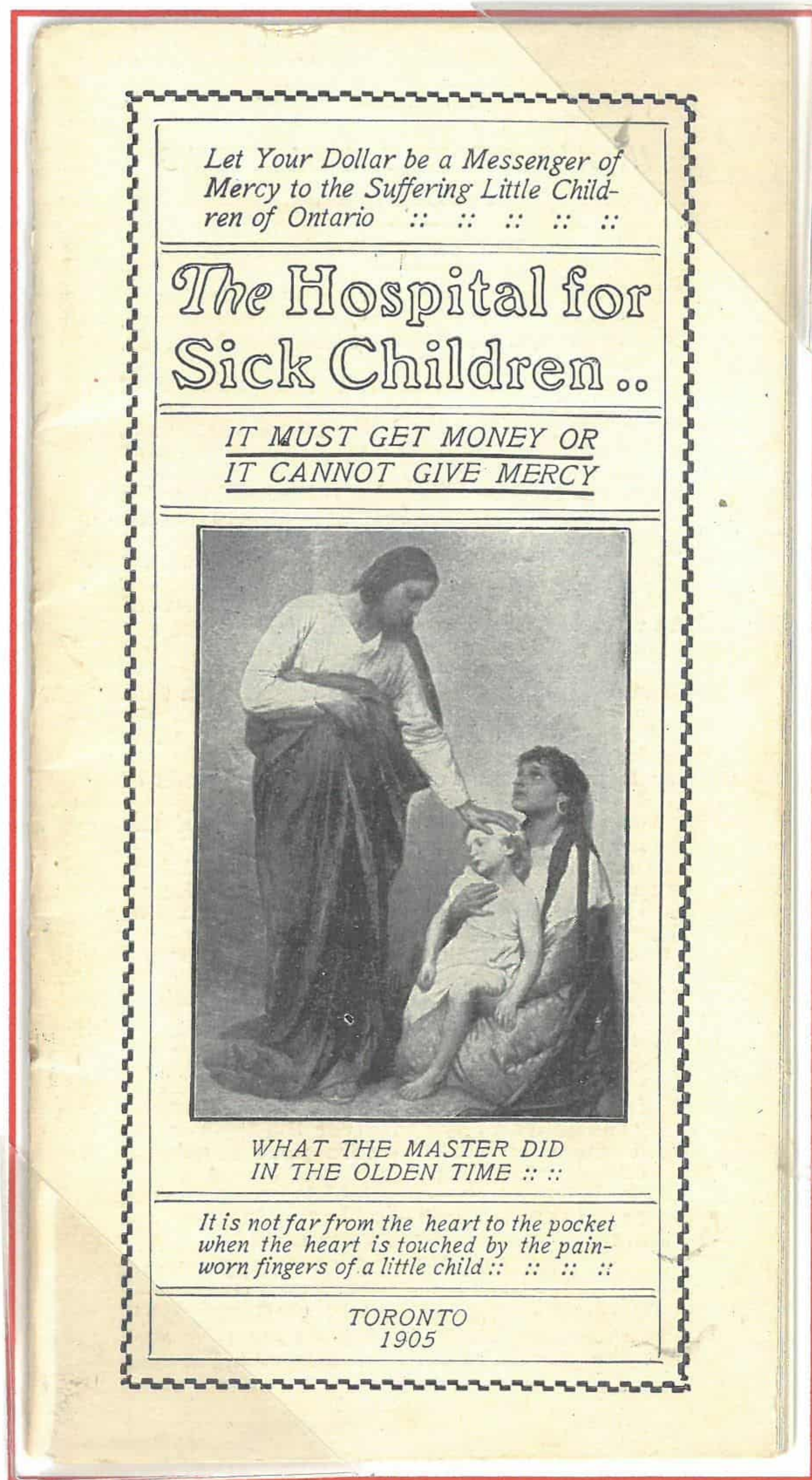
(23)

Inside back cover of 1910 appeal booklet.

2.1 Booklets and illustrated covers

Each year, in addition to the Annual Report sent to every donor, the Hospital printed appeal booklets that were mailed out widely to Ontarians just before Christmas.

Religious imagery and pictures of nurses (rather than doctors) caring for children recalled the Hospital's roots as a Christian charity founded by women.

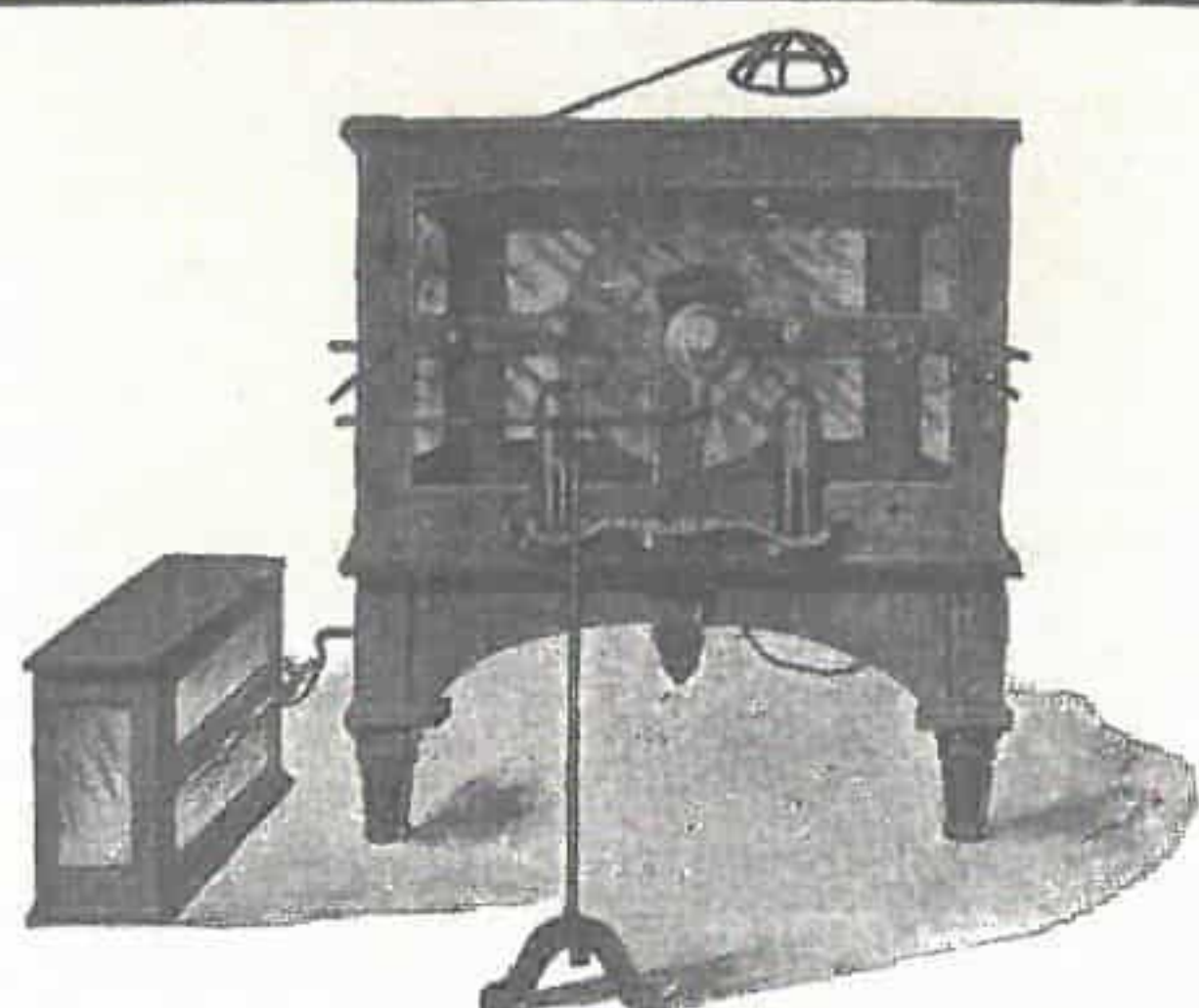


36-page 1905 appeal booklet with halftone images.
The only recorded example of this booklet.

X-ray machine, p11

The booklets were filled with stories and pictures of the Hospital's facilities, staff and new technology.

THE X-RAY AND ITS WONDROUS WORK

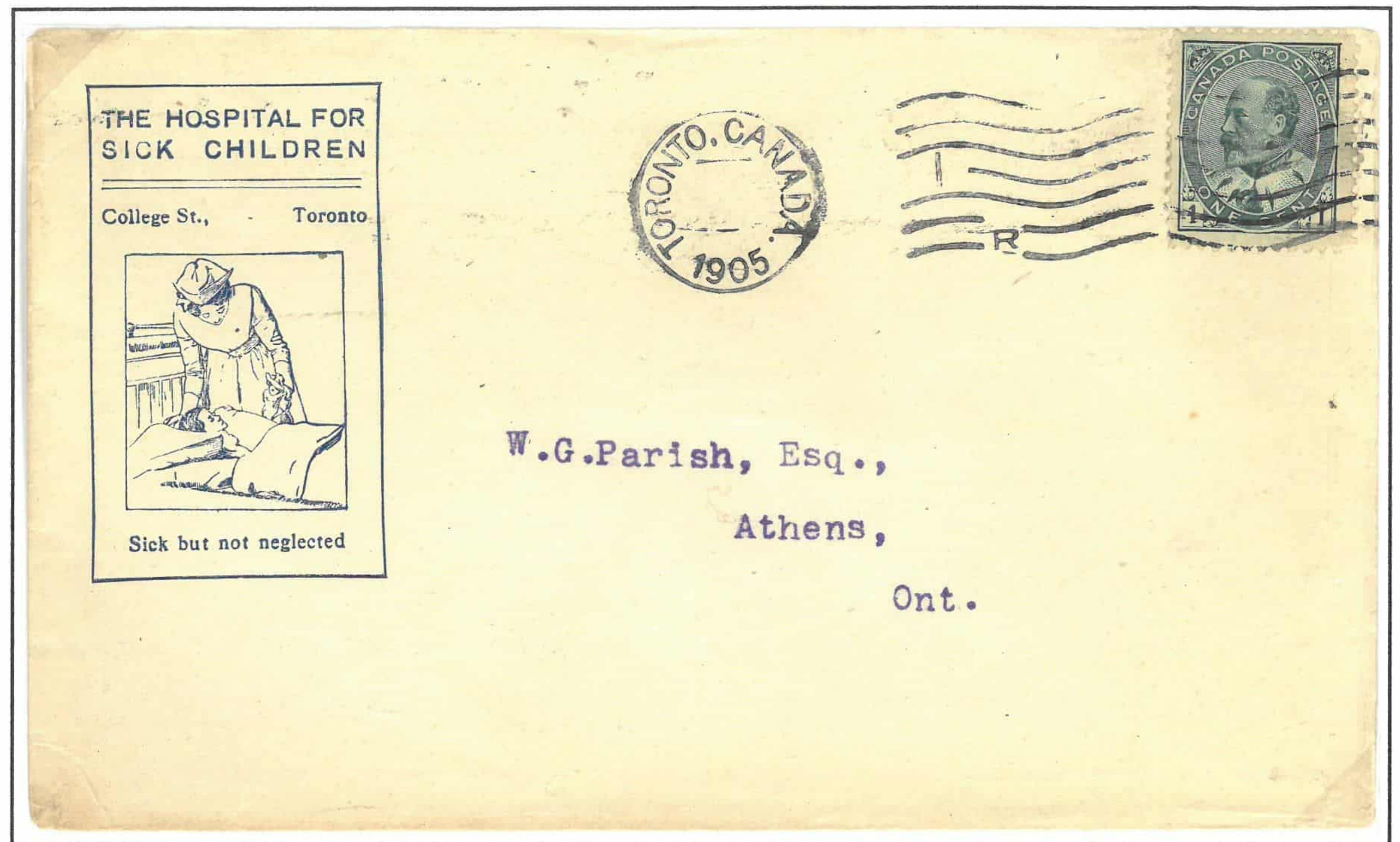


COPY

A curious machine, the X-Ray. No hospital should be without one.

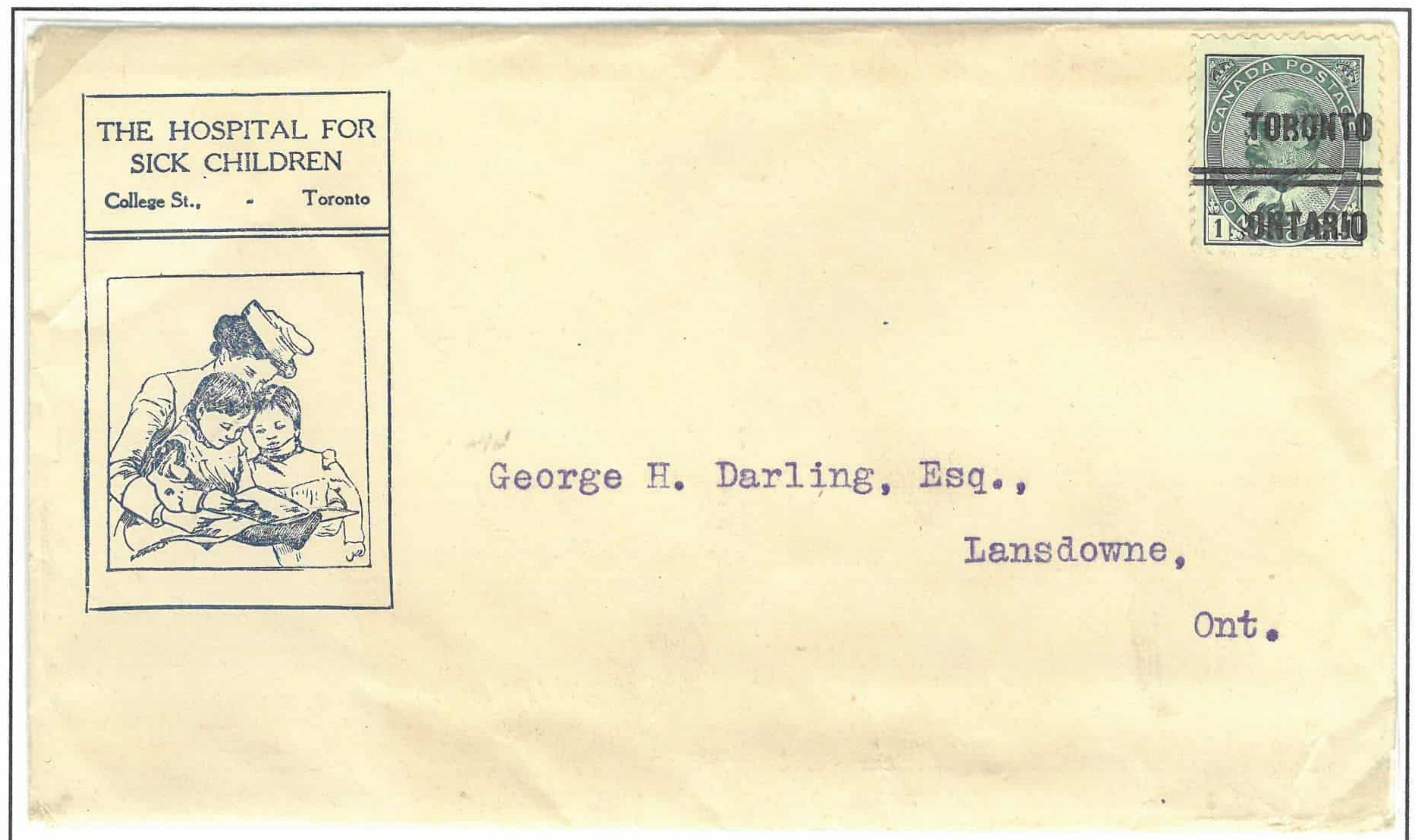
Images of nurses and children catch the eye

The booklets were mailed in envelopes with various eye-catching corner illustrations of nurses and children on the wards. Early printings were captioned "Sick but not neglected".



1905 International machine cancel with mute dater (third class mail), printed matter rate 1c per 4 ounces. Bulk printed matter or solicitation letters were not considered correspondence. To qualify for the rate, the envelopes had to be accessible (unsealed flap) for inspection by the post office.

In later printings, the captions were omitted from the corner illustrations.



Toronto precancel on cover enclosing 1911 appeal material.



J. ROSS ROBERTSON,
CHAIRMAN.

DOUGLAS DAVIDSON,
SEC'Y-TREAS.

THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN,

COLLEGE STREET.

THE LAKESIDE HOME FOR LITTLE CHILDREN,

TORONTO ISLAND.

REMEMBER that every sick child in Ontario whose parents are unable to pay for treatment will, on the Certificate of a Clergyman or an Official of the Municipality, be admitted and treated free of all charge.

THESE INSTITUTIONS ARE
SUPPORTED BY
VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS.

Toronto, December 11th, 1911.

A solicitation letter (shown here) and donation form accompanied the annual appeal booklet.

The powerful emotional language of the letter was characteristic of Robertson's evocative style, and appeared in all of the Hospital's printed appeal material.

Dear Sir:-

I am again appealing to you for help for the Hospital for Sick Children, for we are sadly in need of funds for maintenance.

Remember that this charity is not a Toronto institution in any sense of the term. It covers all Ontario.

It is open free to every sick child in every part of Ontario whose parents cannot afford to pay.

The sick child where you live has the same claim upon the Hospital as the sick child of Toronto.

Remember that the Hospital is next door neighbor to every home where children suffer and mothers sorrow.

Money and mercy make a great team - your money and the Hospital's mercy.

Your money can keep the golden hinges on the doors of the Hospital's mercy - big doors, but they open wide to let the little children in.

Can you spare us a dollar this Christmas time? Just a dollar.

Yours faithfully,

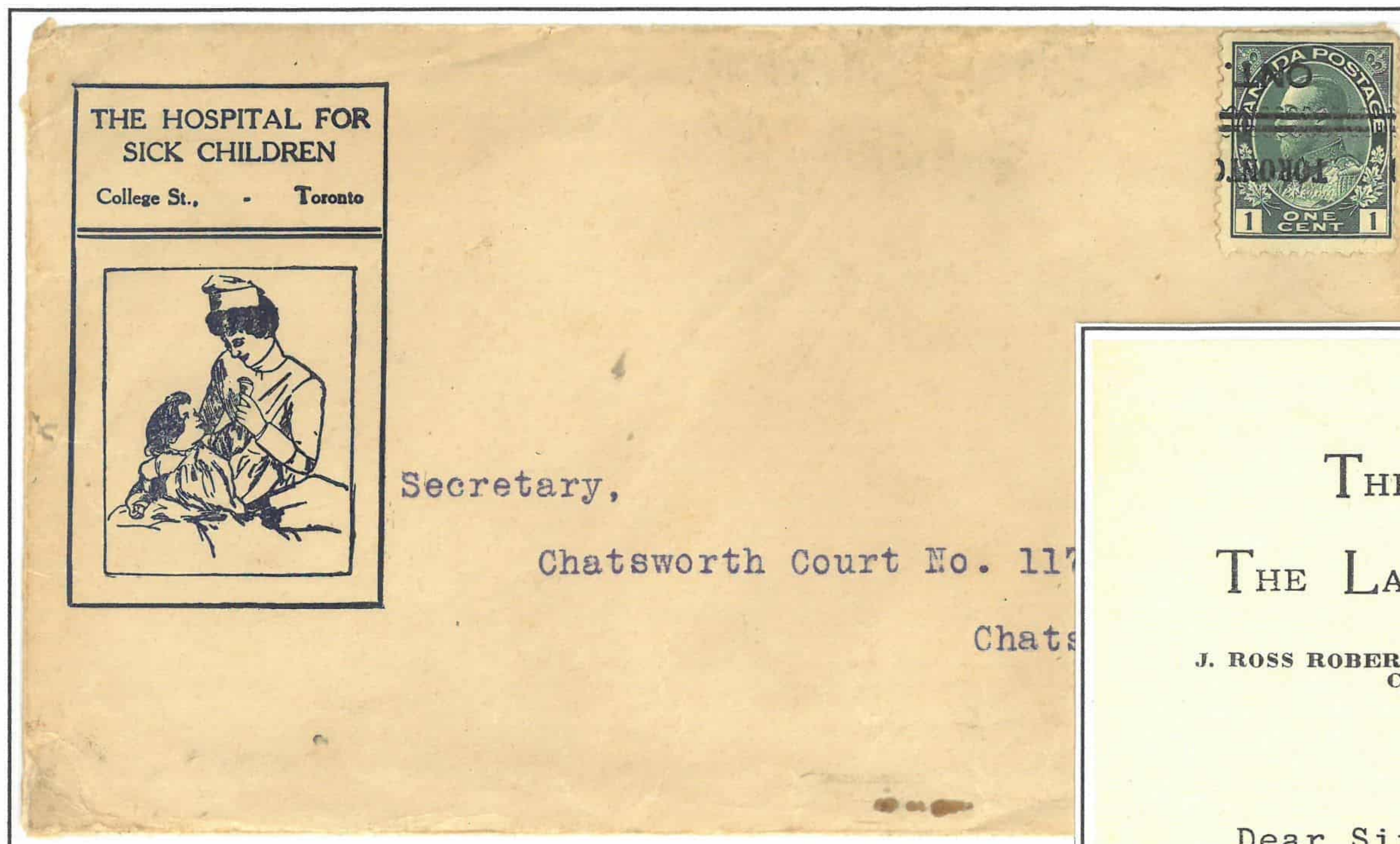
J. Ross Robertson

Chairman of the Trust.

2.2 Appeal letters

Reminder letters were mailed in the spring to forgetful donors.

If needed, reminder letters were sent in the spring



Inverted Toronto precancel.

As Canada entered the Great War in 1914, the Hospital began to use military language to remind donors of the needs of children on the homefront.

“Remember that **every year is a war year** with the hospital, **every day is a day of battle**, every minute the hospital needs money – not for its own sake – but for the children’s sake.”

–1914 Annual Report

► Military analogies were used in appeals throughout the war years, as can be seen in this reminder letter mailed late in the war.

Typeset reminder letter on Hospital letterhead with facsimile signature of J. Ross Robertson. Mailed in above cover addressed to the Secretary of Chatsworth Court No. 1174, I.O.F.

THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN
COLLEGE STREET.
THE LAKESIDE HOME FOR LITTLE CHILDREN
TORONTO ISLAND.

J. ROSS ROBERTSON,
Chairman.

DOUGLAS DAVIDSON,
Sec'y-Treas.

Toronto, March 28th, 1918

JUST A REMINDER

Dear Sir:--

Will you permit me to kindly remind you that your Court has not responded to my appeal sent you in December last?

I sincerely trust, although the Christmas Season has passed, that you will favor me by bringing my letter before your Court and by giving a contribution--no matter how small--every dollar helps.

There never was a year in the history of the Hospital when funds to carry on the work were more needed than now.

Just remember that Your Dollars are the Bone and Sinew of the Great Arm of the Hospital's Mercy, and that every child under its care gets a fair start in the race for Perfect Manhood and Womanhood.

Money mobilizes the powers of help and healing for the Hospital's drive day and night against the trenches where disease and pain and death assail the lives of the little ones.

So will you please ask your Court to help us?

Yours faithfully,

Chairman of the Board.

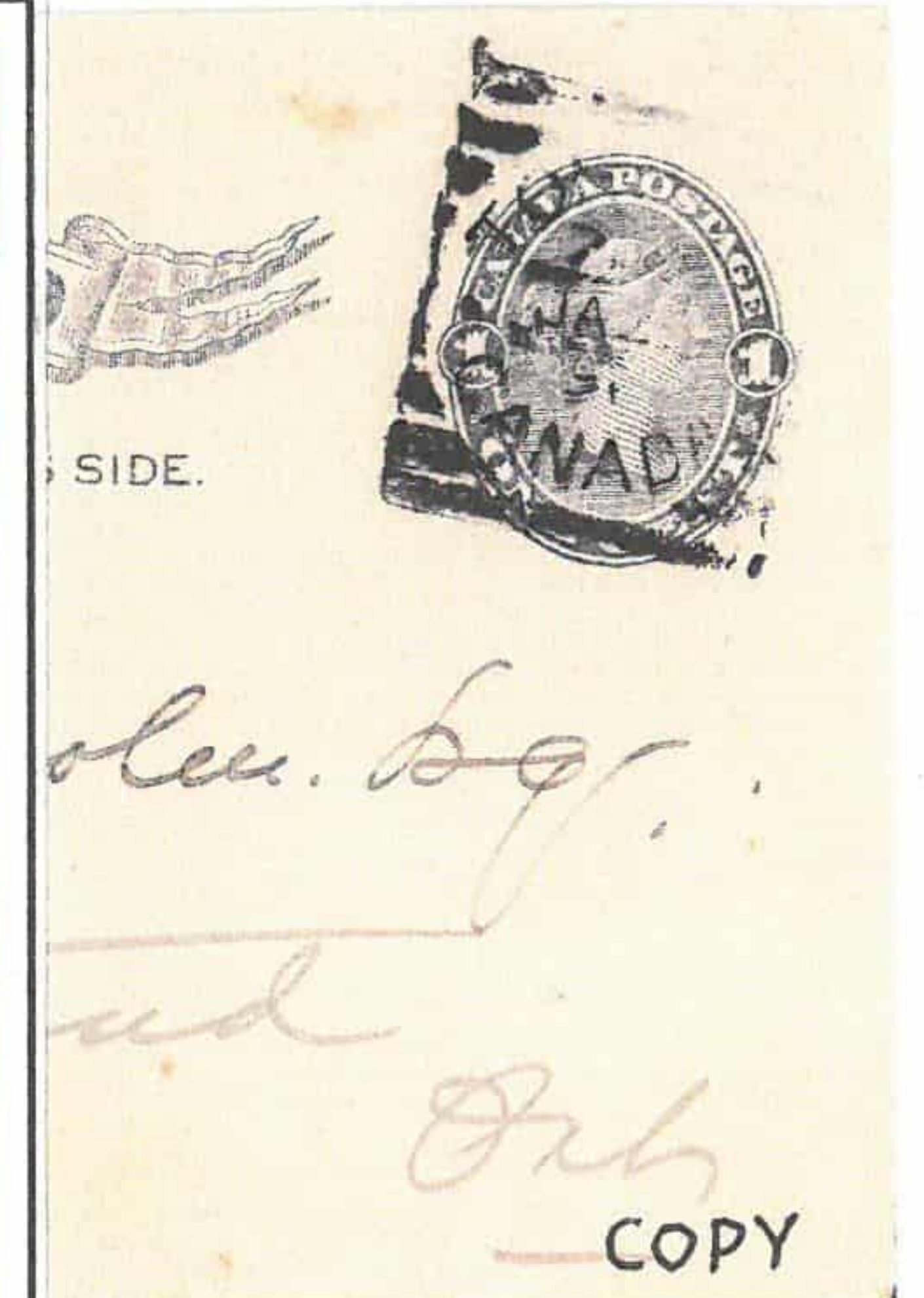
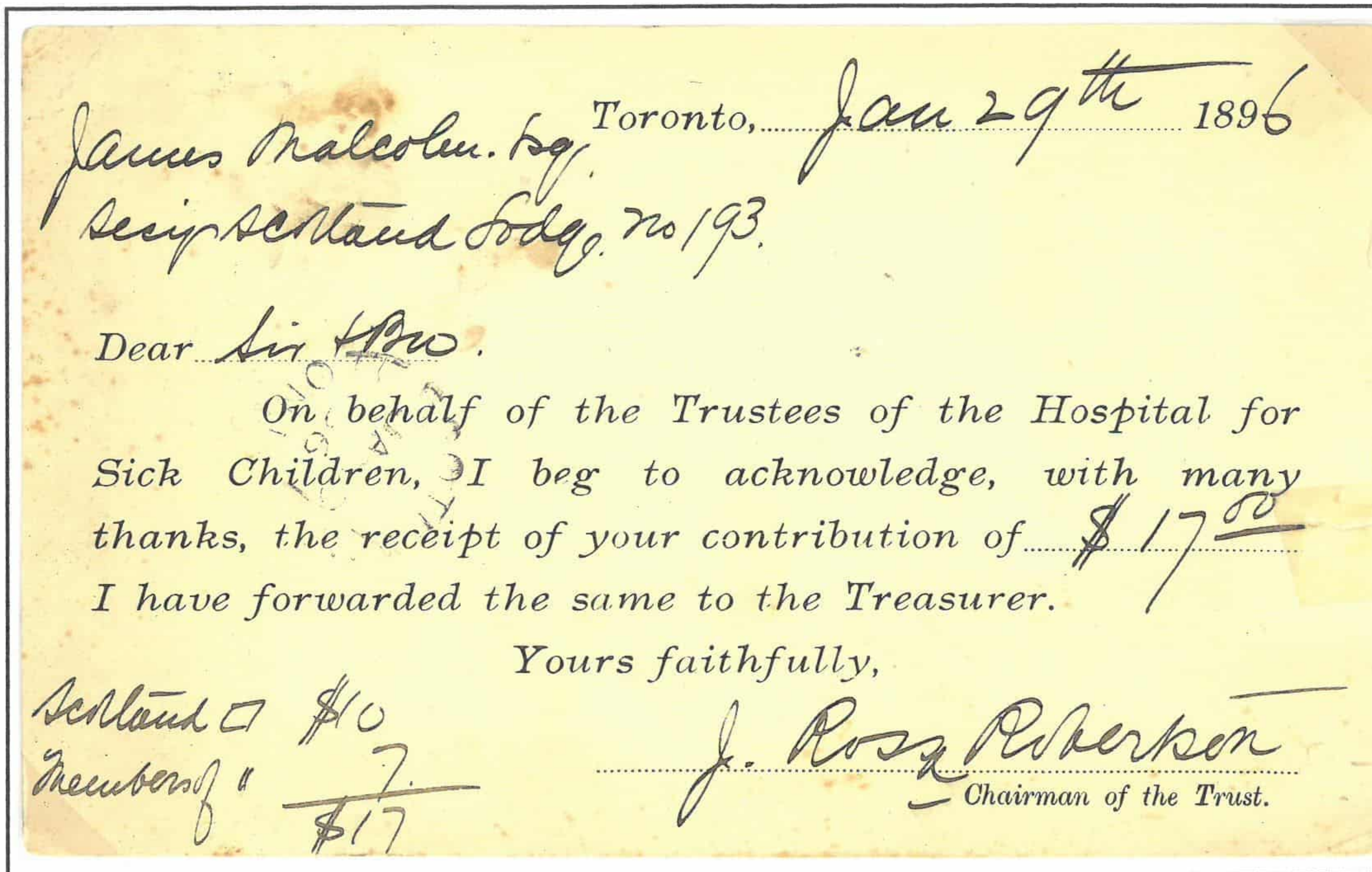
The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, and The Lakeside Home, its Convalescent Branch on Toronto Island, have no connection whatever with any other Home, Hospital, Sanitarium or Institution in Toronto or Ontario. No seals or stamps are sent out by this Hospital.

3.1 Early acknowledgement post cards

Thanking donors was key to the Hospital's fundraising efforts. For this purpose, post cards were mailed to donors acknowledging the donation amount. The Annual Report included a list of all donors.

Masonic lodges were an important source of donations. Robertson, himself a Freemason and later Grand Master, made his gift of the Lakeside Home to the Hospital contingent upon free care being provided to the children of Freemasons.

Early forms were printed on regular issue and private post cards

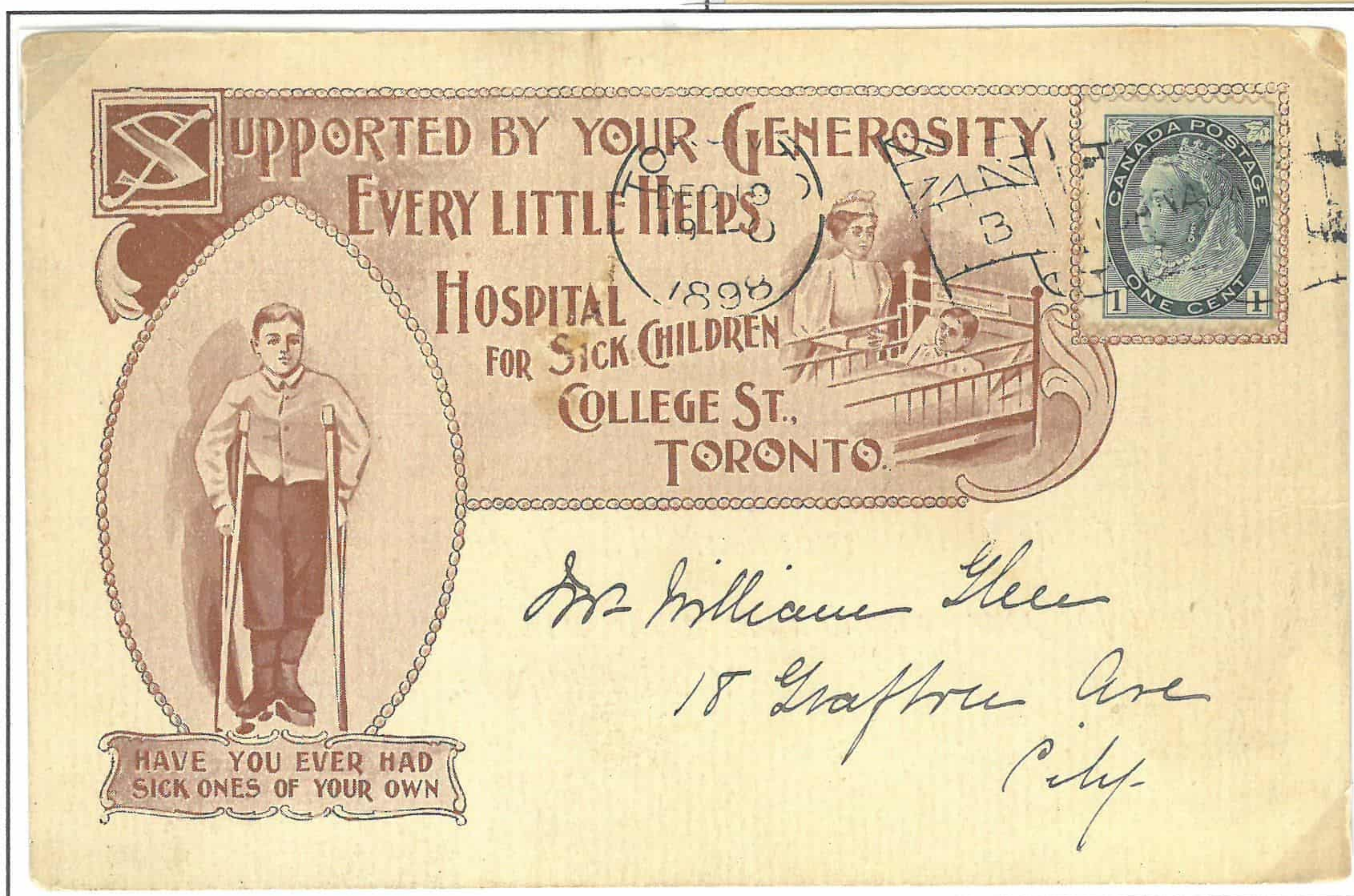
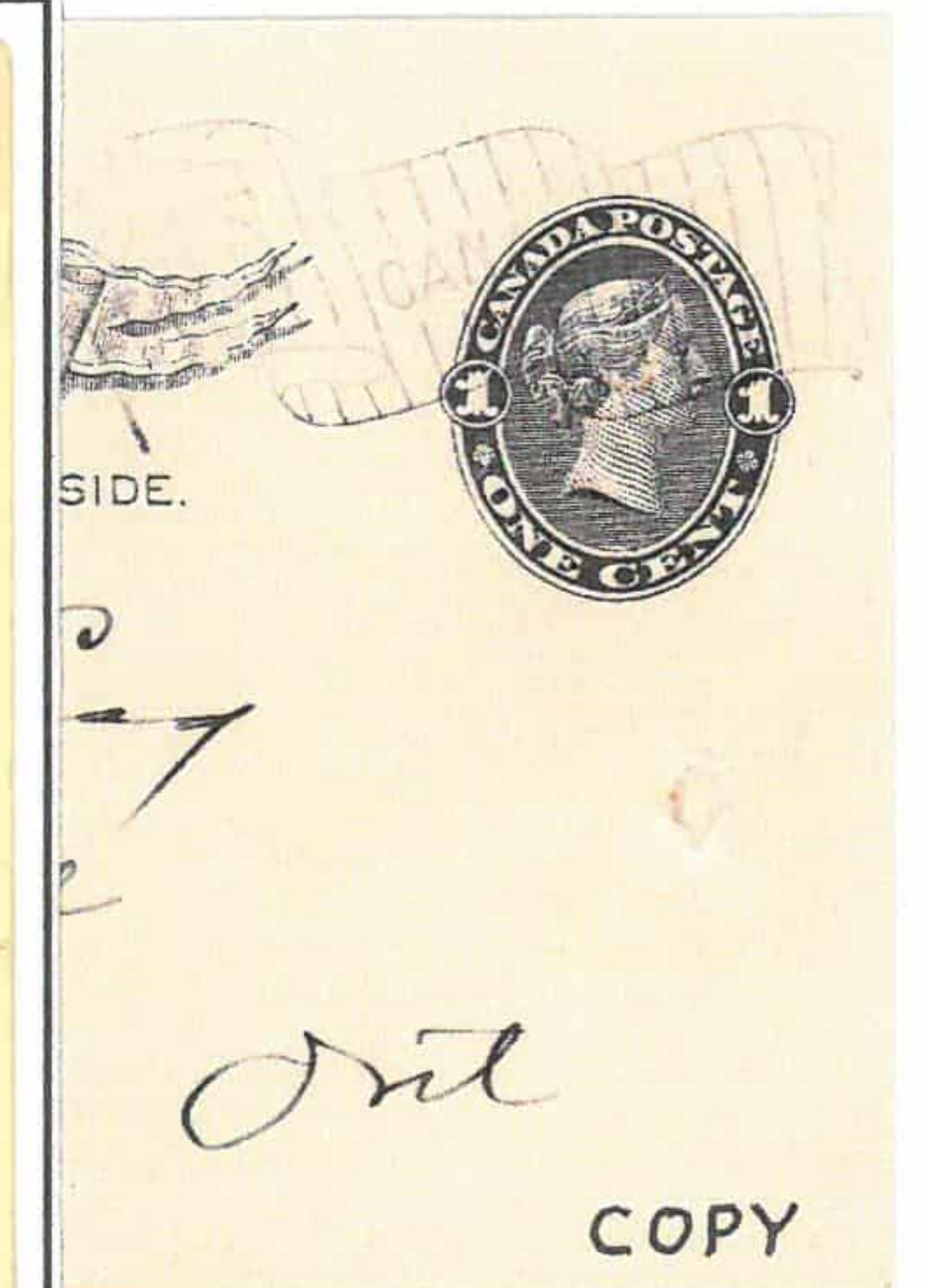
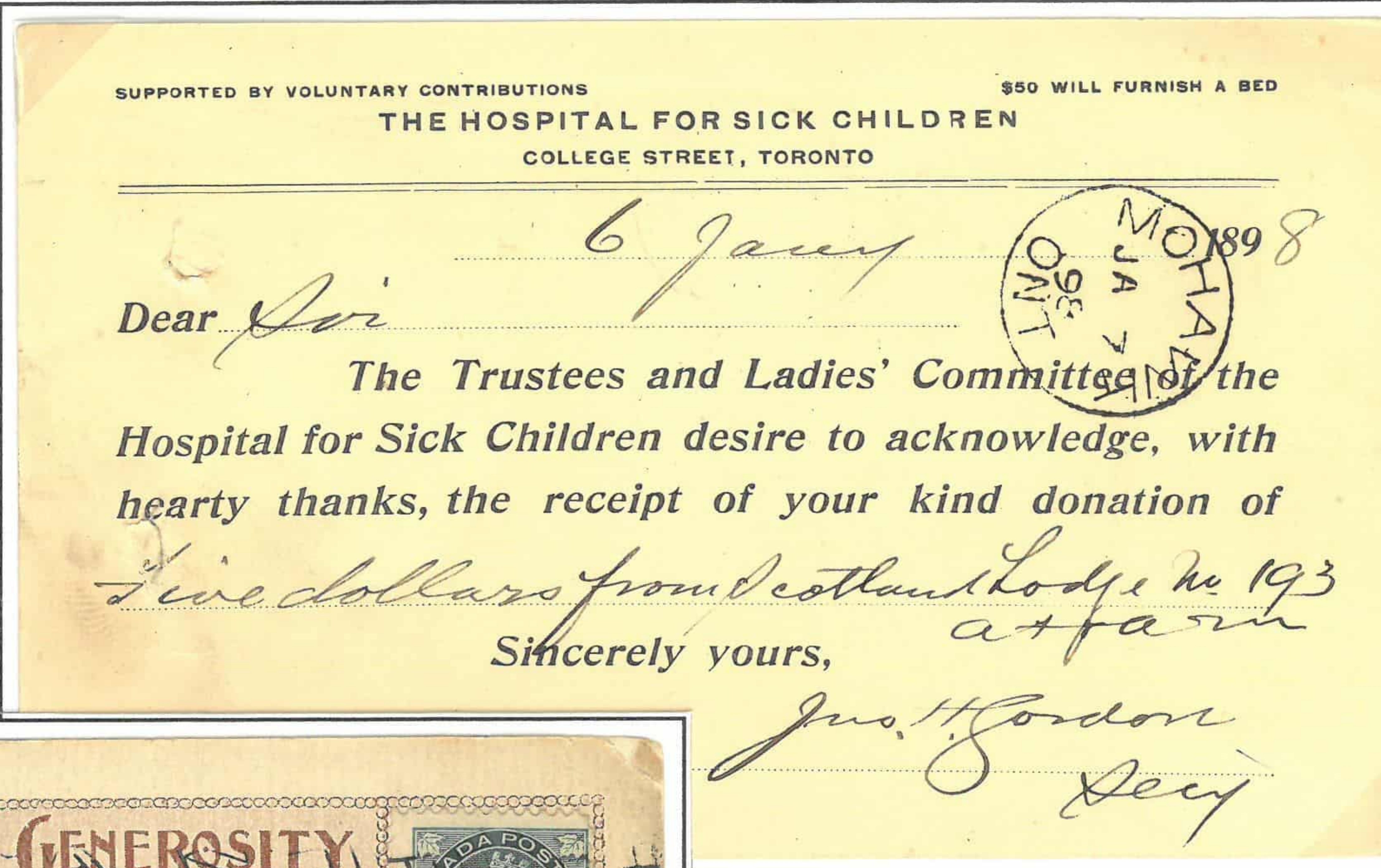


January 29, 1896 Toronto squared circle cancel, 1¢ postcard rate.

Wasting no space, the Hospital also used the back of receipt post cards for fundraising.

In addition to furnishing a bed for \$50, donors could name and maintain a cot for an annual payment of \$100.

January 6, 1898 Toronto Bickerdike machine cancel, Mohawk receiver on the back. Cards that mention the Ladies' Committee are rare.



Soon after new regulations permitted, the Hospital added eye-catching images and a short appeal message to the front of its receipt post cards.

General donations jumped from \$15,363 in 1898 to \$27,562 in 1899.

In 1900, inclusion of the full list of donors would have put the Annual Report into the next rate step, so instead the list was printed in the *Toronto Evening Telegram*, a copy of which was sent to each donor.

Private post card with advertising on the address side, allowed as of December 9, 1897. This card was in violation of Item 1 of the regulations requiring ¼ inch of space around the stamp.

December 19, 1898 Bickerdike machine cancel.

3.2 Private order post cards (QV)

In 1901, the Hospital began using receipt post cards with a lavish illustration on the address side depicting part of a magnificent **stained-glass window** commissioned by Robertson in memory of his wife and daughter.

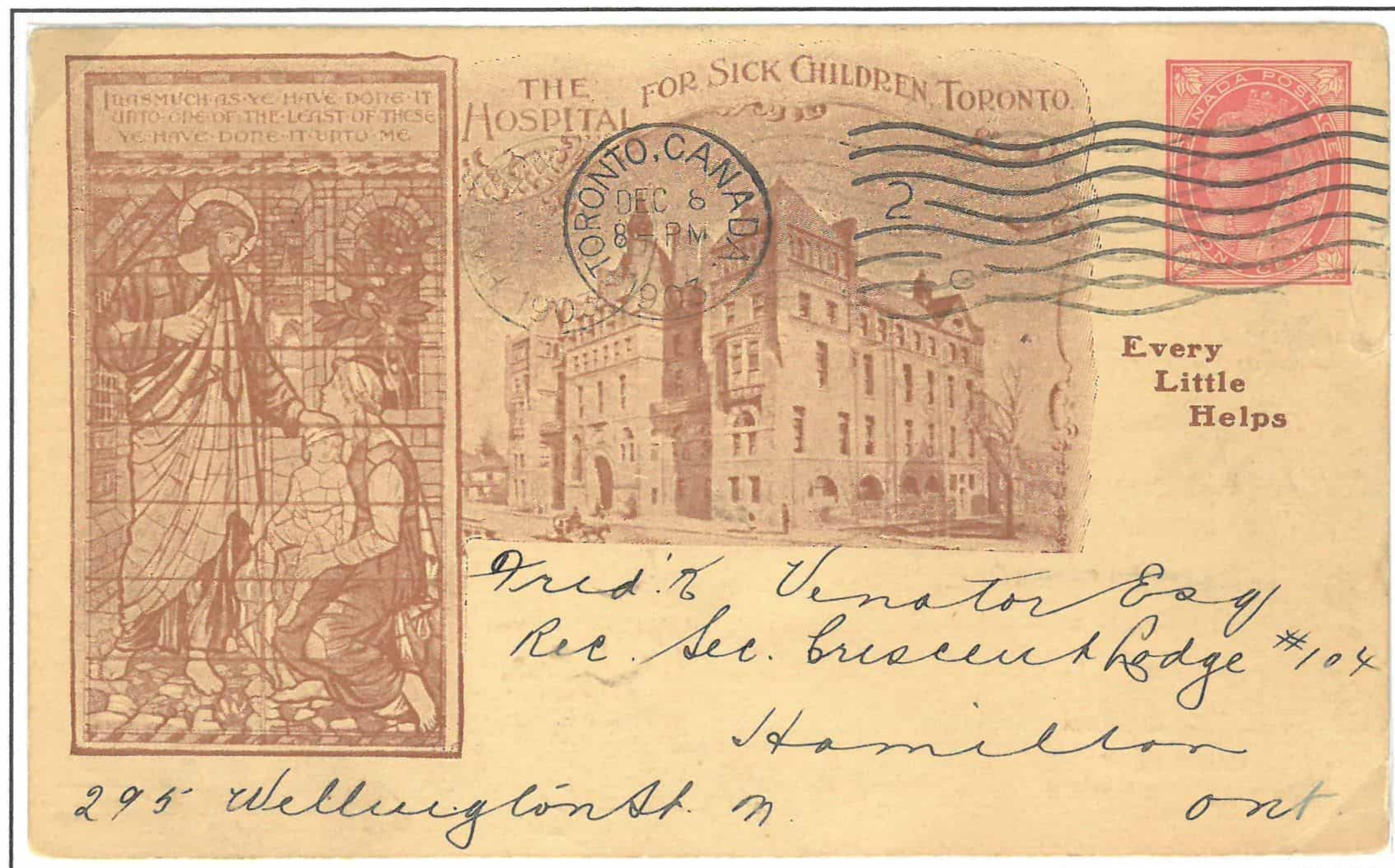
The window, titled *Christ Healing the Sick Child*, was installed in the entrance hall, visible from both the street and the main foyer.

Private order post card without address separation heading, printed in sheet format by American Banknote Company. This card was in violation of Item 1 of the regulations requiring ¼ inch of space around the indicium.

January 21, 1902 Bickerdike machine cancel.

Census: 17 examples of this card style recorded.

Starting in 1901, lavishly illustrated private order cards...



The design was later revised to comply with the requirement for ¼ inch of space around the indicium, however the new layout of the view of the Hospital was now in violation of item 2 requiring reservation of a clear space of 3¼ x 1½ inches at the lower right corner for the address.

December 8, 1903 International machine cancel.

Census: 13 examples of this card style recorded.

The Hospital subsequently added appeal messages to the back of the cards, as well as "Before and After" illustrations of club feet to publicize one of the Hospital's major clinical activities.

With the establishment of the pediatric specialty of orthopedics at the University of Toronto in 1906, surgical success stories began to dominate the Hospital's fundraising appeals, highlighting to benefactors that they were helping to save children from a life of poverty and pain.

The child's need, not the child's place of residence, is its claim to help from this Hospital. Every sick child in Ontario is as sure of help as the child living within sight of the Hospital Building.

COPY

THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN, COLLEGE STREET
Toronto, Dec 14 1903

Dear Donor:—I am directed by the Trustees of the Hospital to acknowledge with thanks your kind donation of \$ 5.00 to the funds of the Institution, from Bruce Lodge No. 104 1009.

The Trustees are most grateful to you for your remembrance of the wants of this charity.

Yours faithfully,
DOUGLAS DAVIDSON,
Secretary-Treasurer

Per B. M. G.

CLUB FEET
Before and after Hospital Treatment

This type of form was printed for post cards acknowledging group donations, with a space to fill in the donor name.

Forms for cards mailed to individual donors did not have a space for the donor name.

Both types of form had a space to fill in the donation amount.

3.2 Private order post cards (KEVII)

...featured the Hospital's magnificent stained-glass window

The stained-glass window motif was continued into the reign of King Edward VII.

These cards continued to be in violation of the requirement for a 3¼ x 1½ inch space for the address.

April 28, 1905 International machine cancel, Chippawa receiver cds.

Census: 8 examples of this typesetting recorded.



Different printings can be distinguished by variation in the typesetting and shading of the illustrations on the address side of the cards.

December 5, 1906 International machine cancel.

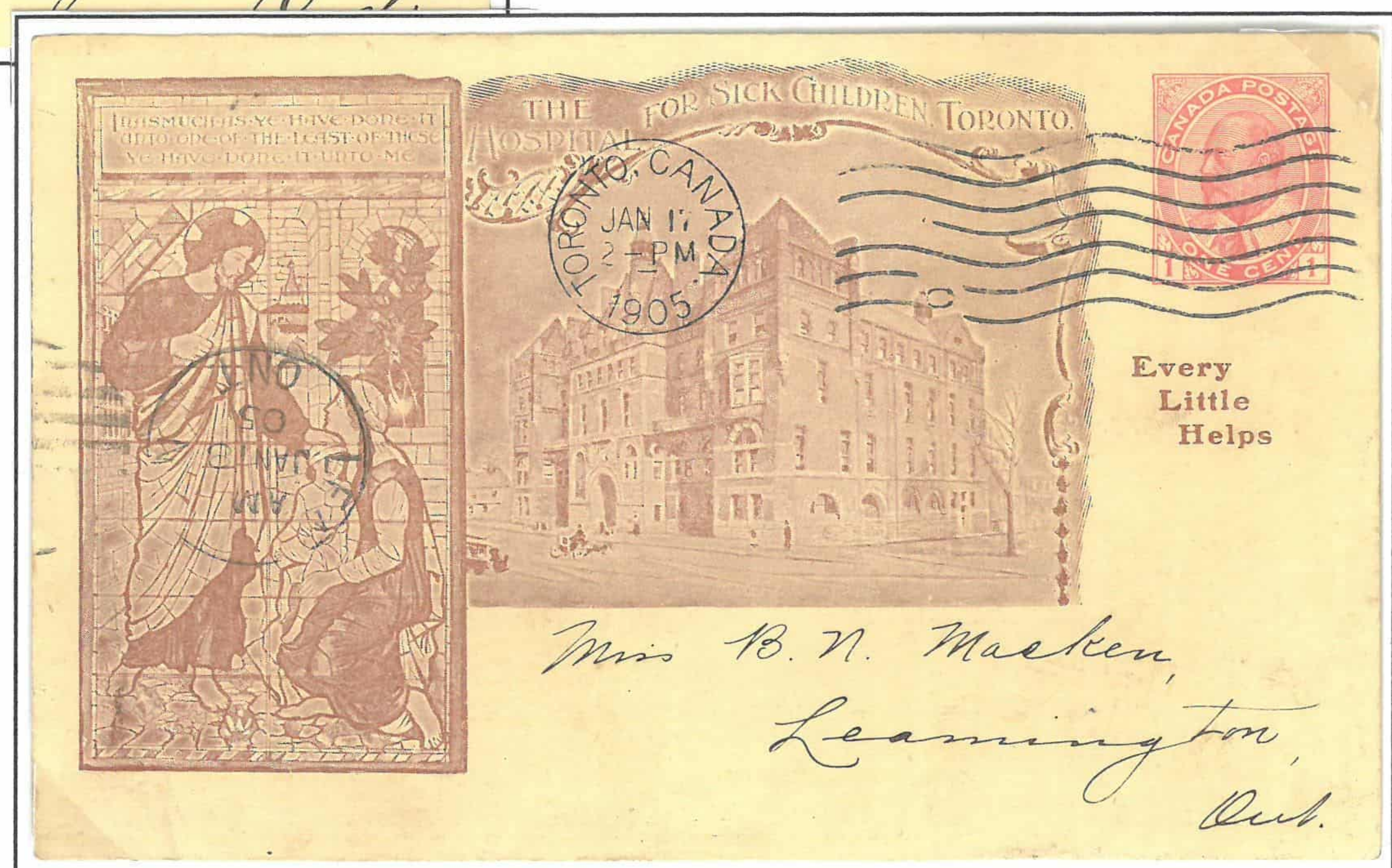
Census: 5 examples of this typesetting recorded.

The window was dismantled and later refashioned when the Hospital moved to its current location on University Avenue.

Addition of foreground in the Hospital image further encroached on the address space.

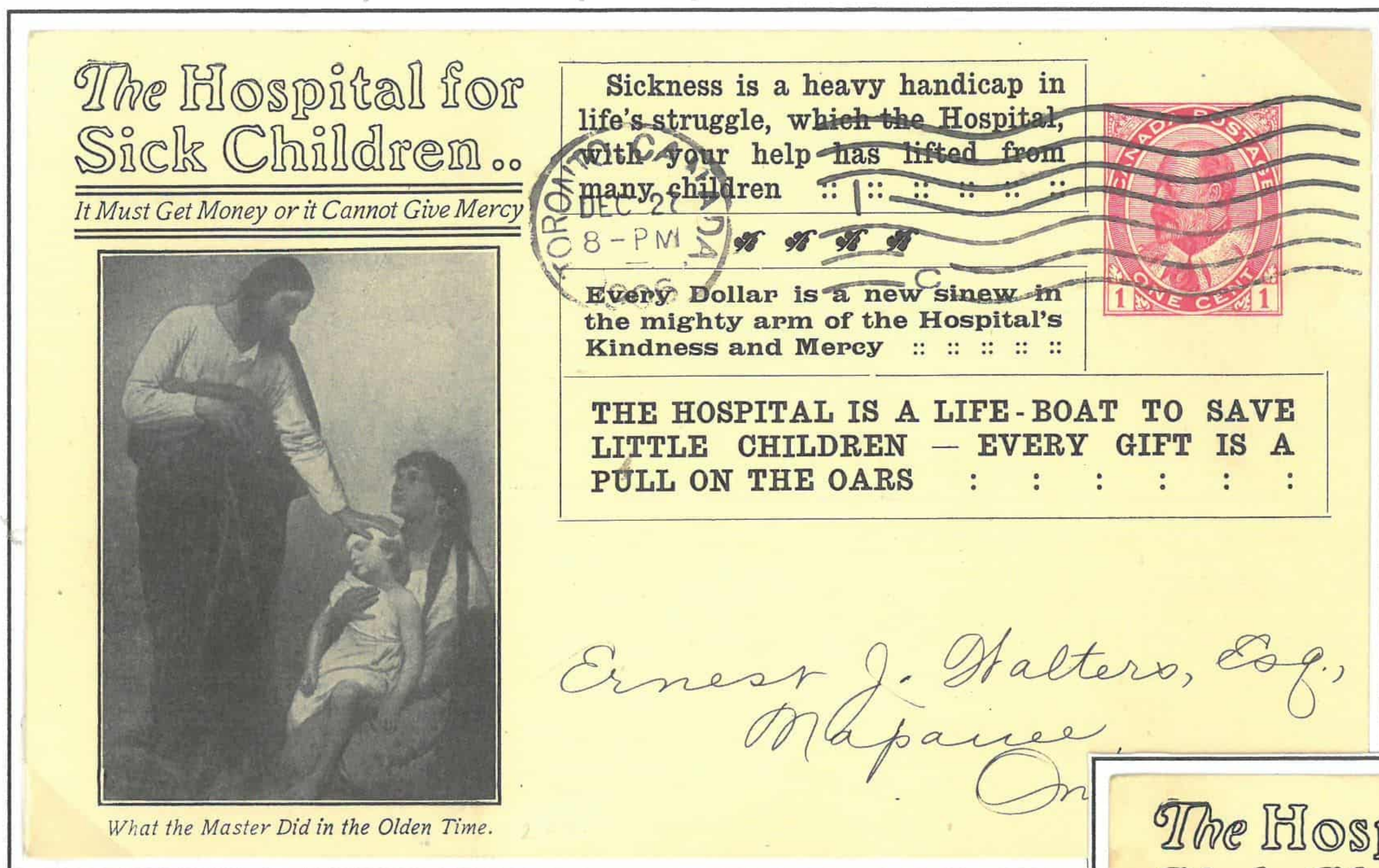
January 17, 1905 International machine cancel, Leamington receiver duplex cds.

Census: 5 examples of this card style recorded.



3.2 Private order post cards (KEVII)

Later the religious imagery was replaced...



In 1906, the illustrations on the front were replaced with a half-tone image of Christ healing a child and several heartfelt appeals. Cleft palate (hare-lip) images were added to the "Before and After" images of club feet on the back.

COPY



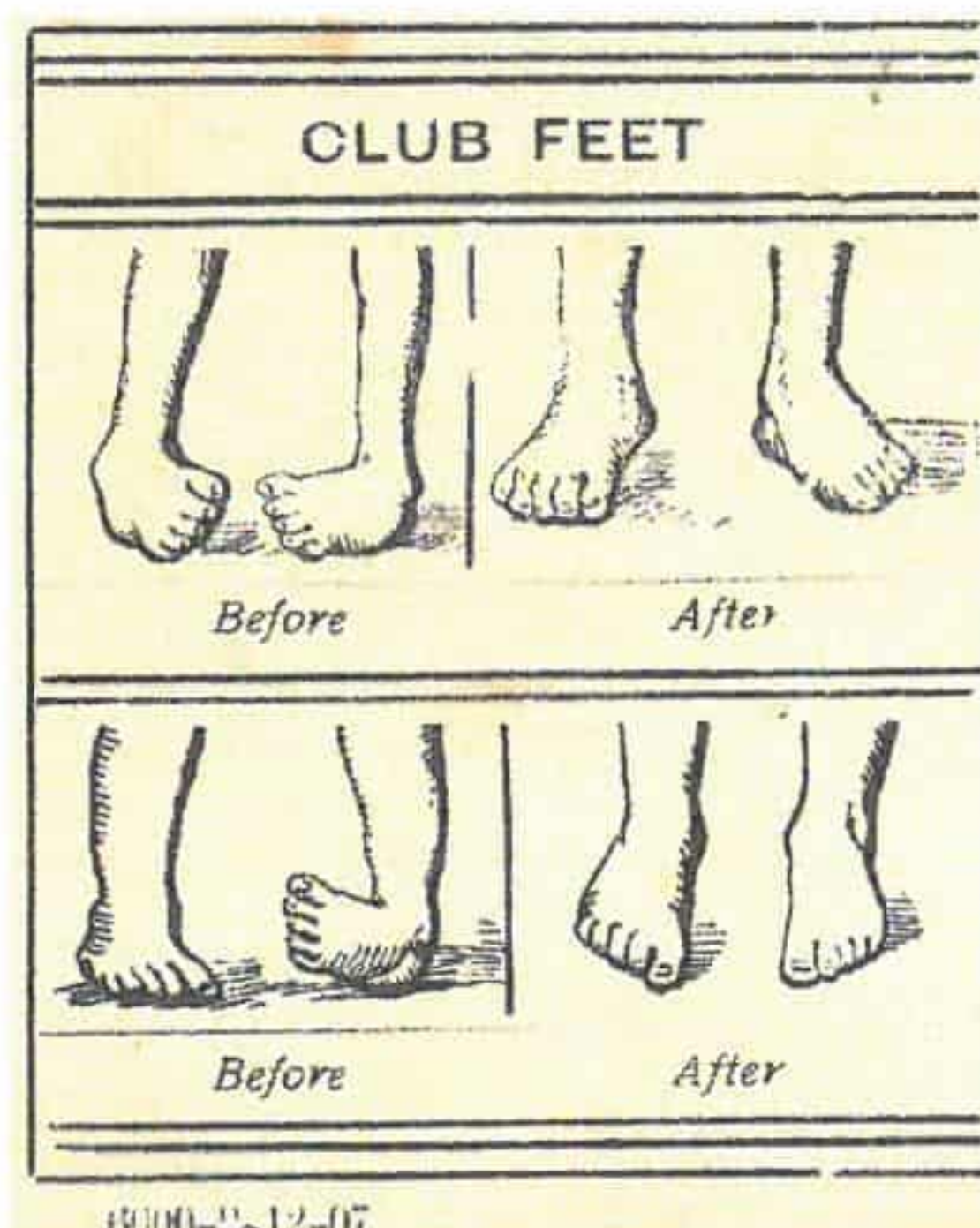
The addition of boxed text on the front caused continued violation of the requirement to reserve a 3/4 x 1 1/2 inch space for the address.

December 27, 1906 International machine cancel.

Census: 5 examples of this card style recorded.

A year later, the picture was changed again to one of a woman holding an infant, still with some religious overtones. The half-tone images on the back were replaced with illustrations of club feet.

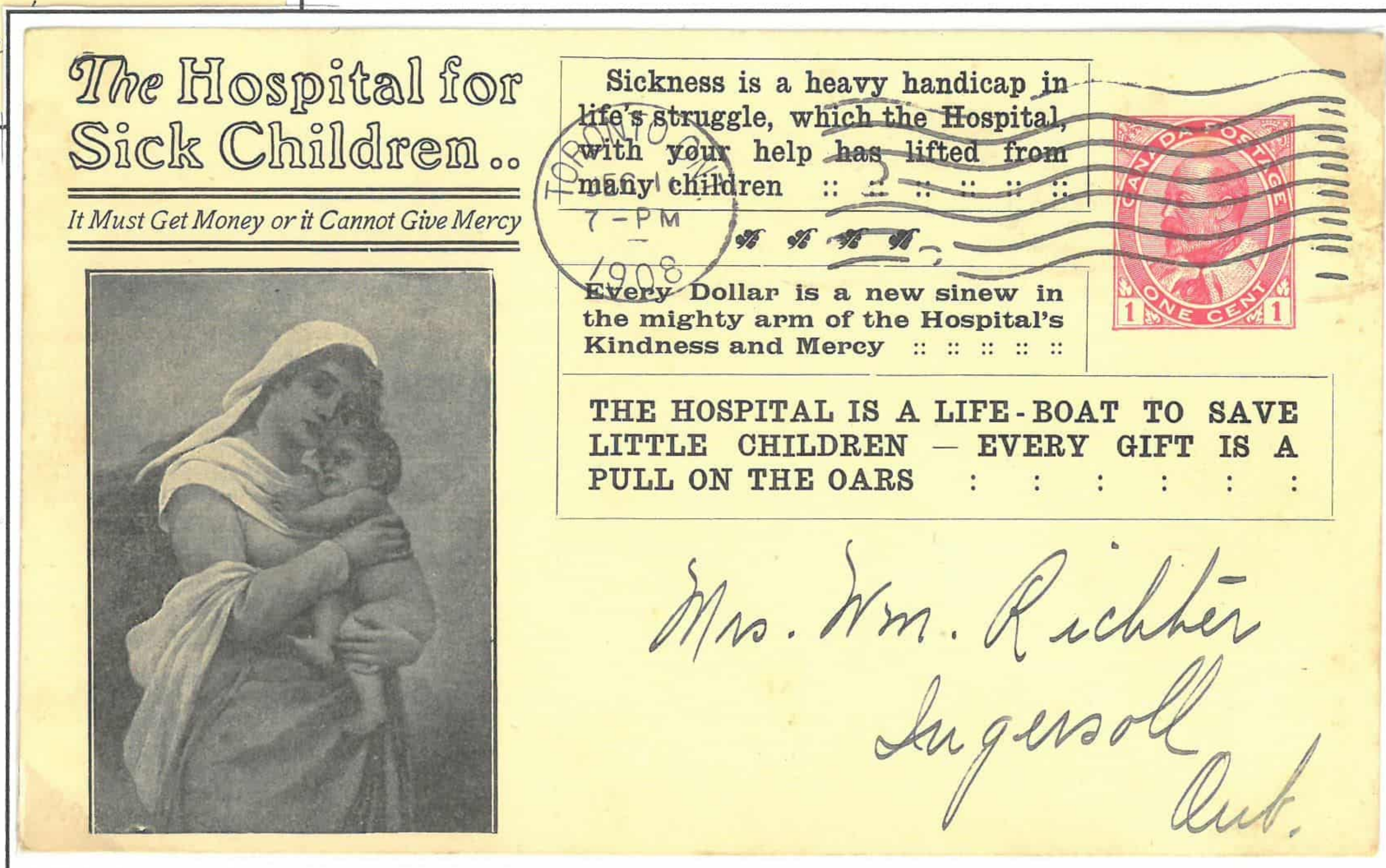
COPY



This card style was in use for the longest period (1908-1915) of all the private order post cards, 14 recorded printings dated 9-12-07 to 26-3-13.

December 17, 1908 International machine cancel.

Census: 1 to 7 examples of each printing recorded.



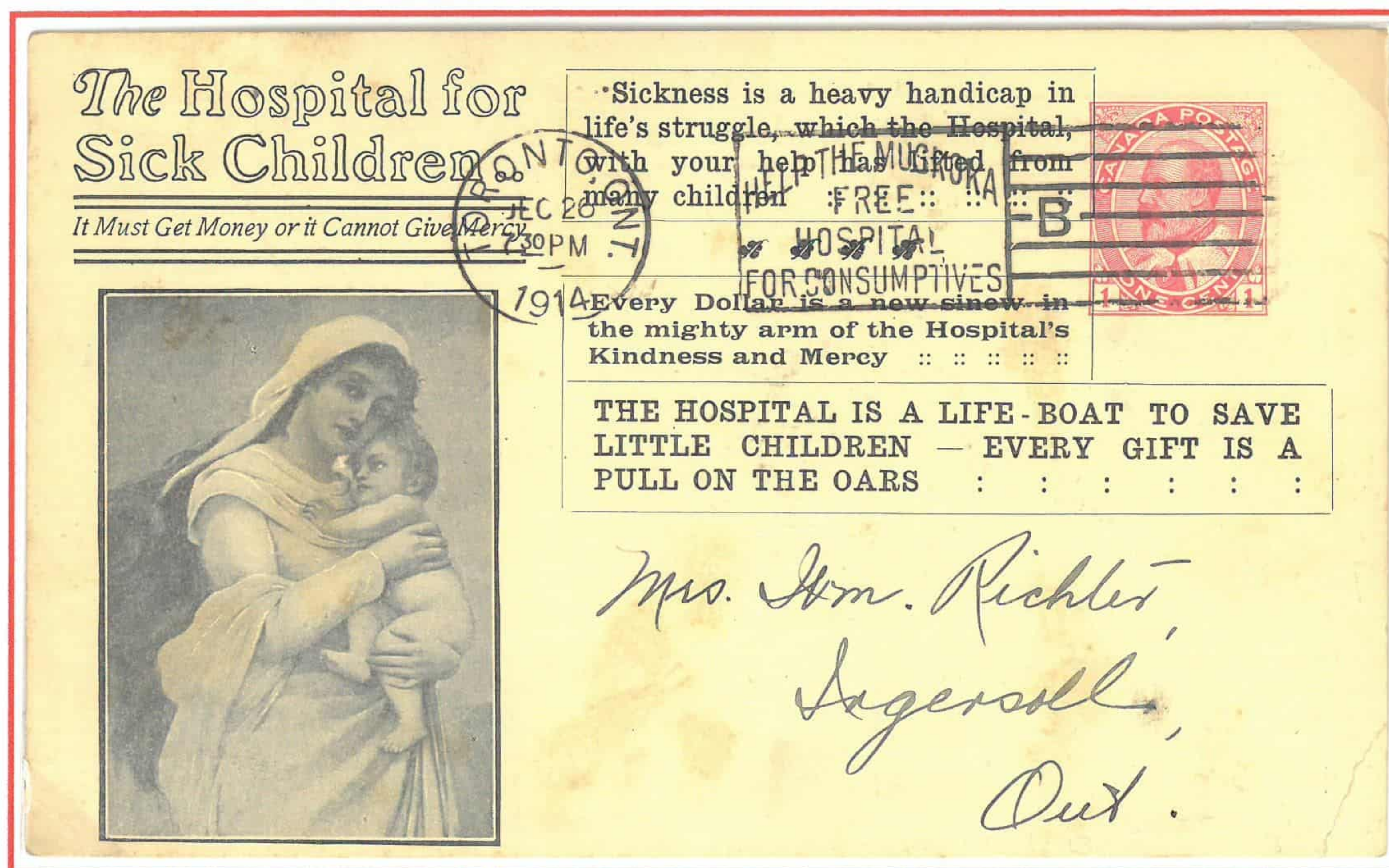
Based on the quantities and types of cards printed, the Hospital received on average 10,000 donations per year from 1907-1913, about half from groups and half from individual donors.

Income from donations averaged nearly \$21,000 annually.

December 20, 1914 International machine slogan cancel.

KEVII card from the same printing as the first 1c carmine KGV card (Form 84-4,000-16-12-13, see next page). The only recorded example.

Form 84-1,000-16-12-13



3.2 Private order post cards (KGV)

...and military references were added during the War

The same design continued into the reign of King George V.

Printings:

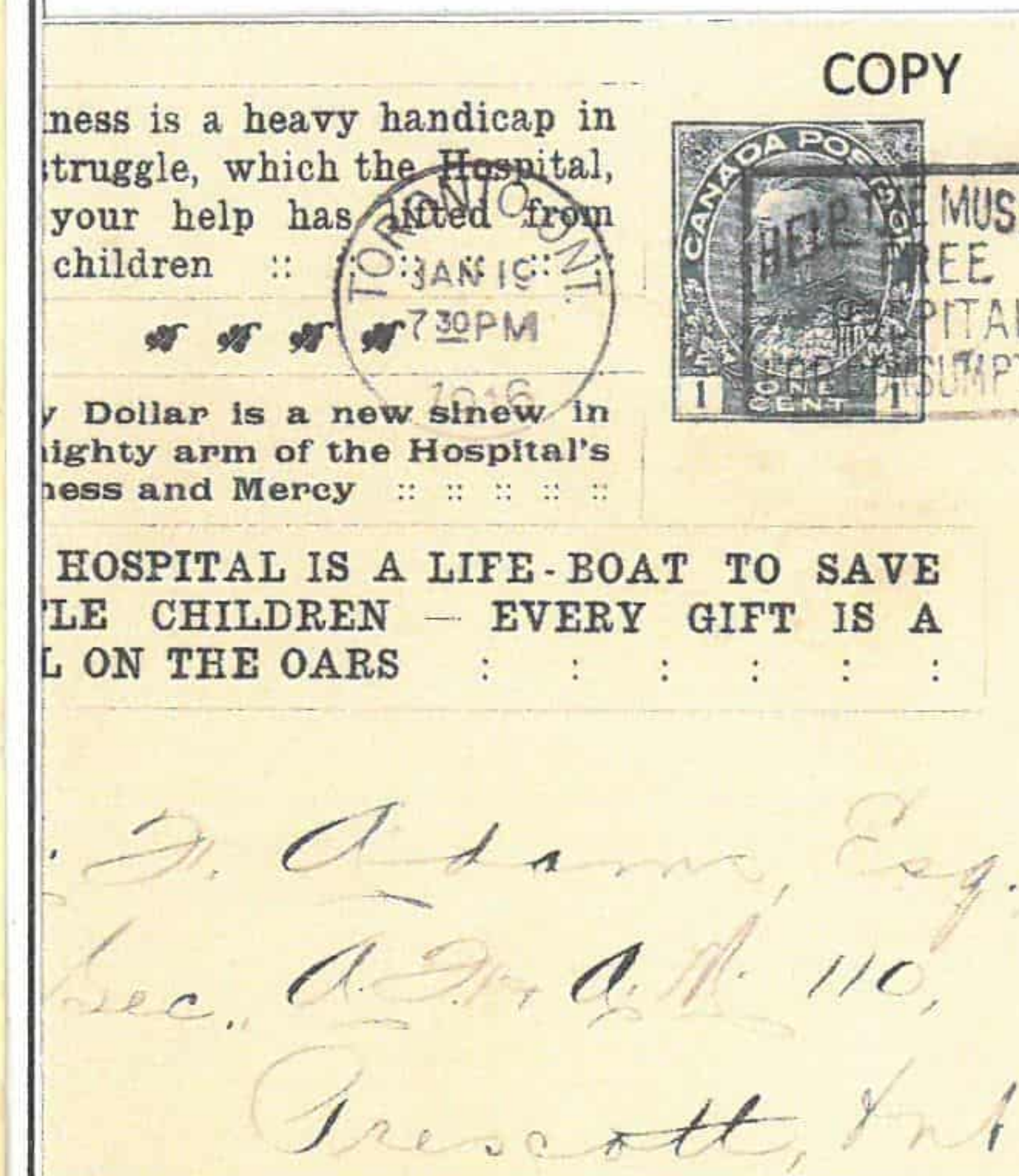
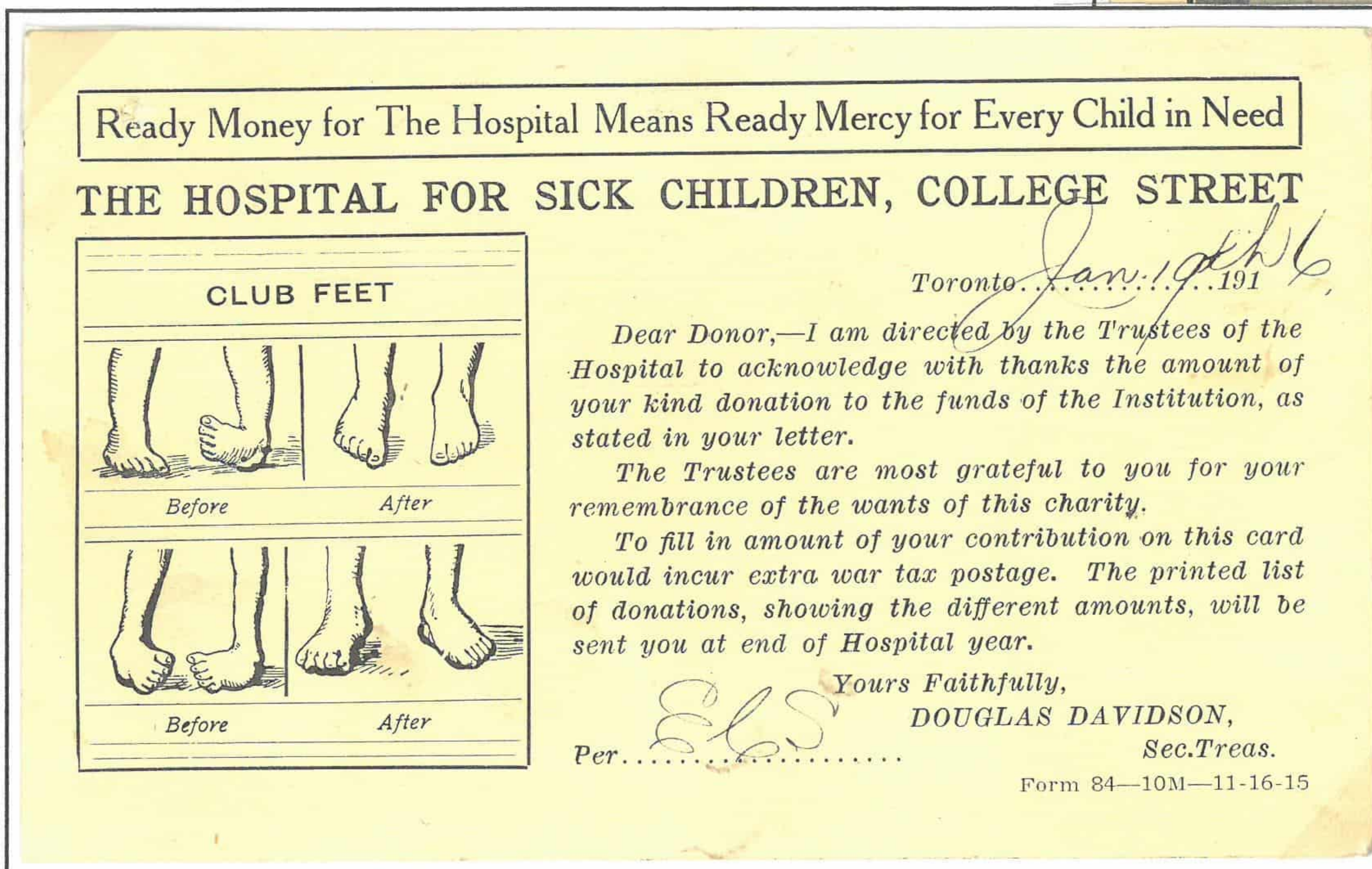
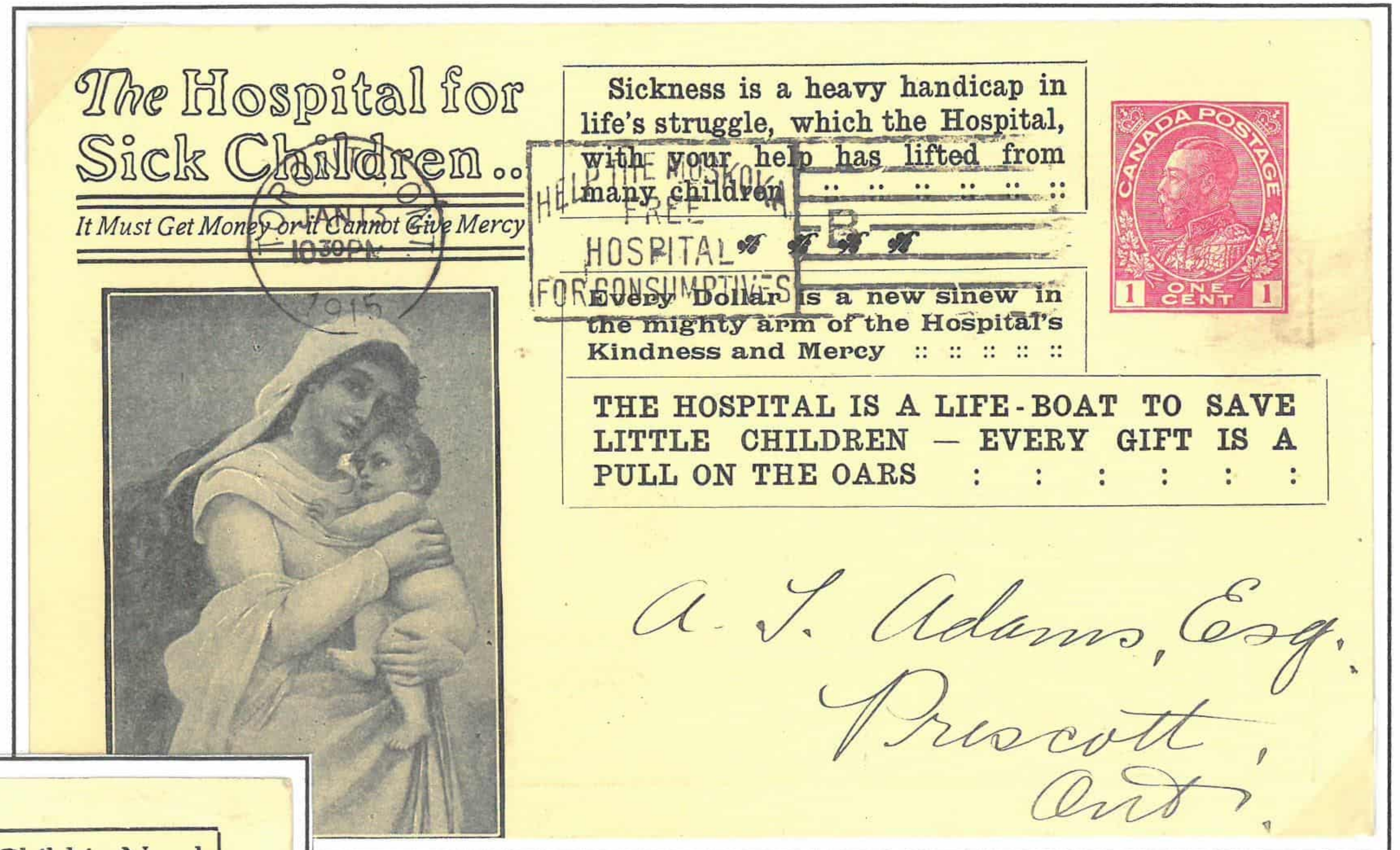
Form 84-4,000-16-12-13

Form 85-5,450-16-12-13 (this card)

January 13, 1915 International machine slogan cancel.

Census: 4 examples of this card style recorded.

In late 1915, the Hospital ordered new cards without a space to write the donation amount, to avoid paying a war tax imposed earlier in the year.



The Special War Revenue Act imposed a 1¢ war tax effective 15 April 1915 on domestic letters and post cards. To qualify as printed matter and avoid incurring war tax, the donation amount could not be written.

January 19, 1916 International machine slogan cancel, 1¢ printed matter rate.

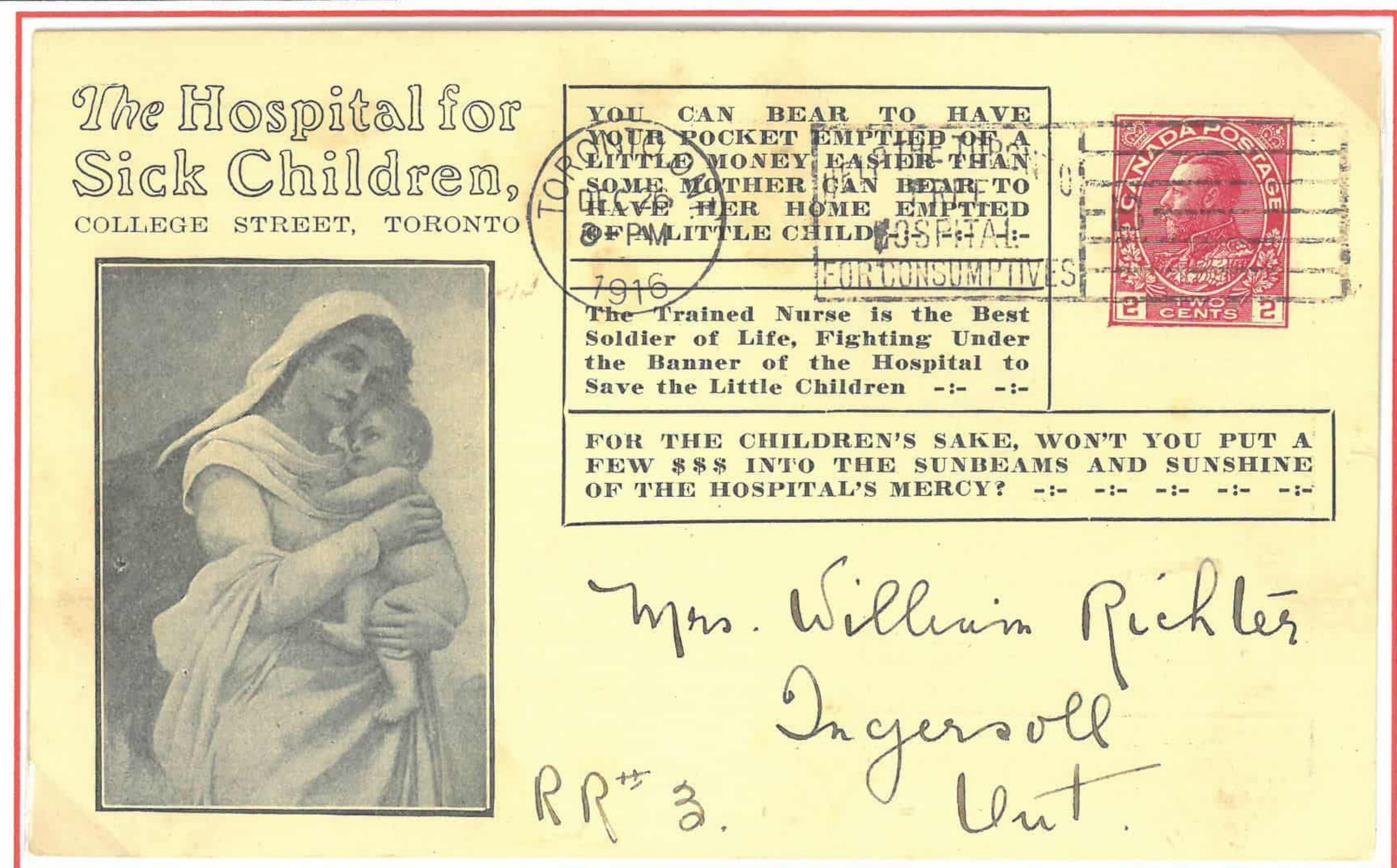
Census: 5 examples of this card recorded (single printing).

Donations may have suffered as a result; in 1916 the 1¢ post cards were replaced with 2¢ cards with a space to write the donation amount restored. The appeals were updated to include a military analogy.

5 recorded printings dated 12-5-16 to 11-17-17.

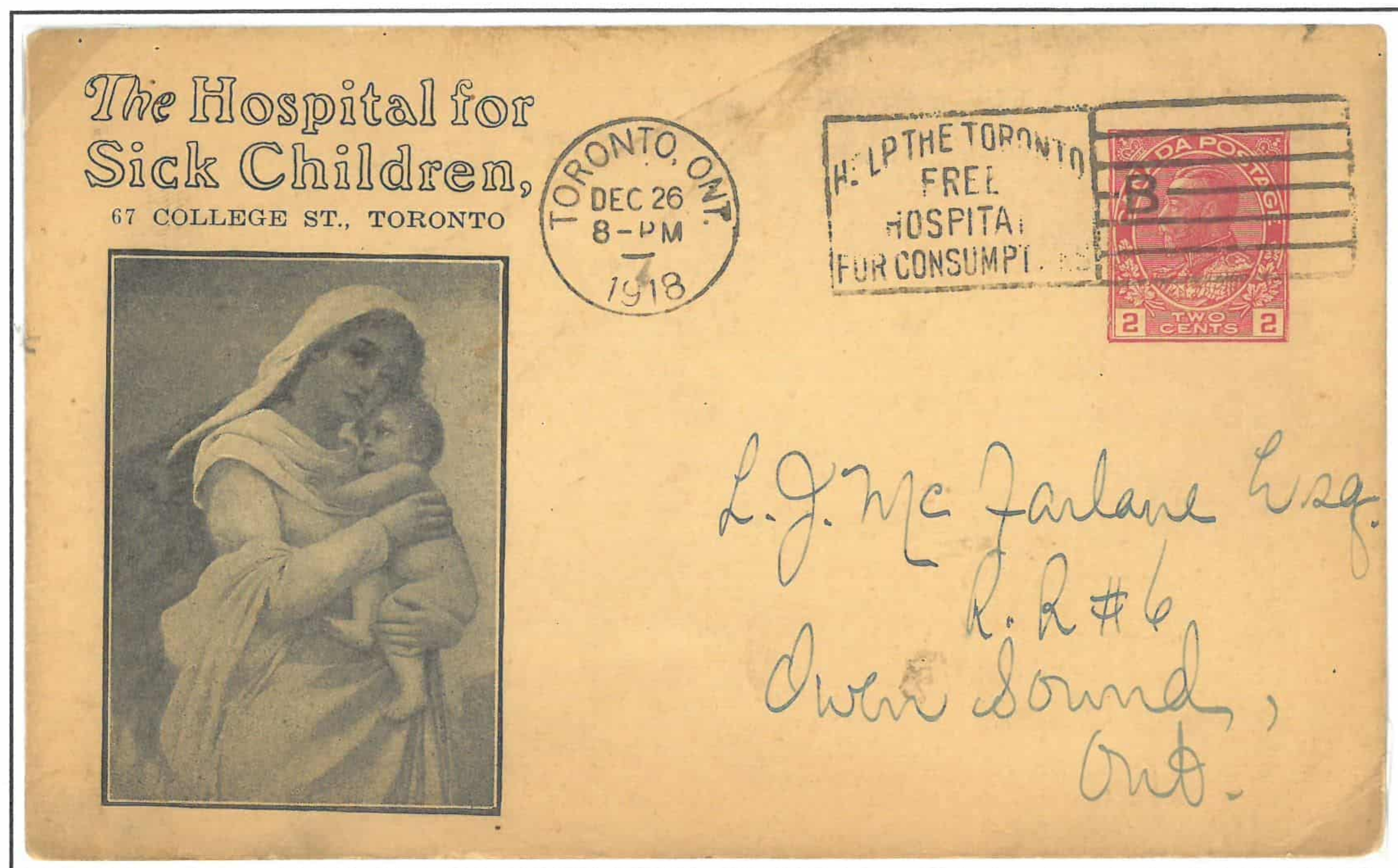
December 26, 1916 International machine slogan cancel, 1¢ postcard rate plus 1¢ war tax.

Census: 1 to 6 examples of each printing recorded. This card is the only recorded example of the first printing (Form 84-500-12-5-16).



3.2 Private order post cards (KGV)

After the war, and with Robertson's death in May 1918, receipt post cards became more austere, without the emotional language of previous appeals. The images of club feet were also removed from the back.

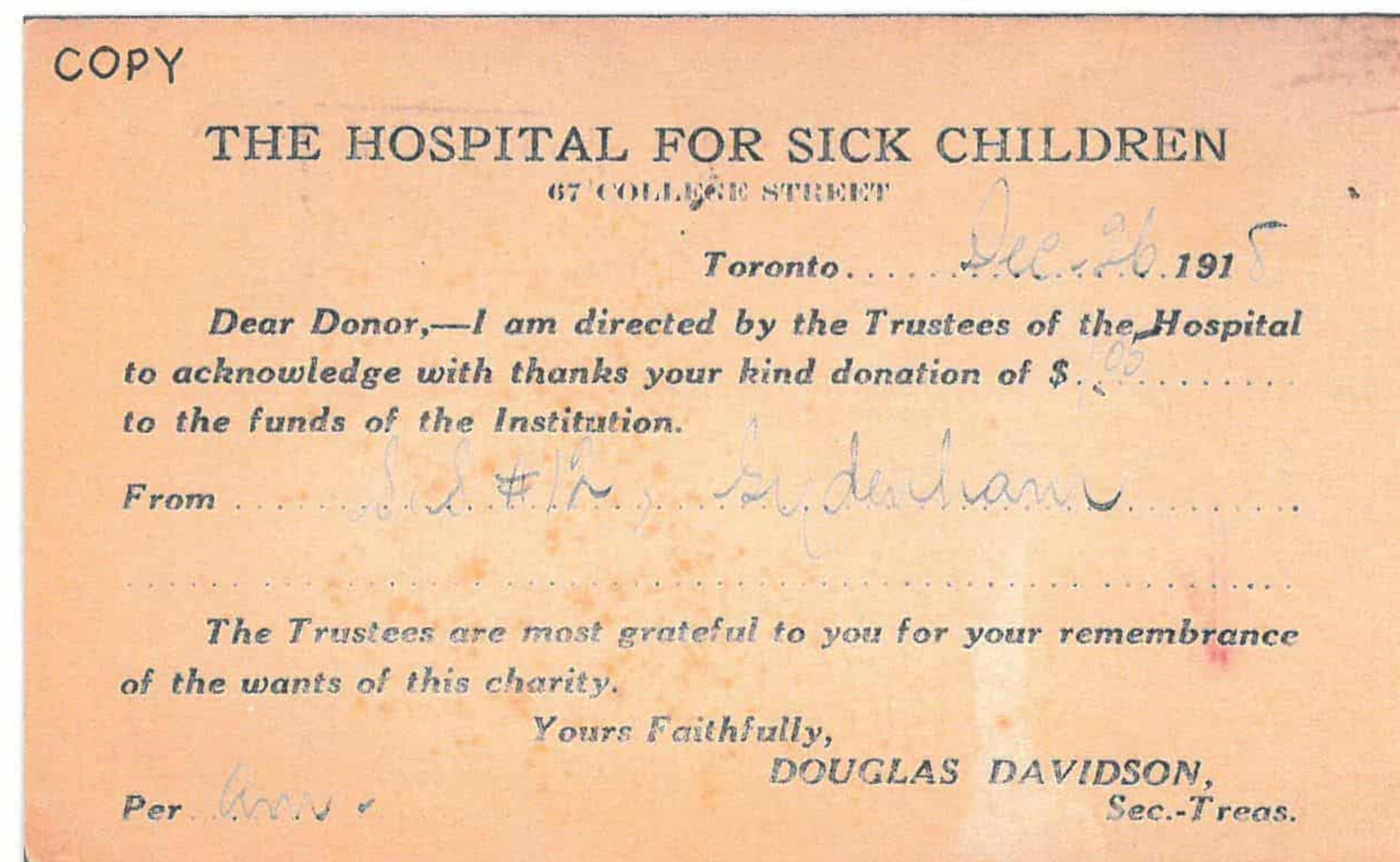


After the War, cards became more pragmatic...

The hospital continued to use private order cards without address separation even though this was no longer necessary as a result of removing the appeal text on the front.

December 26, 1918 International machine slogan cancel.

Census: 5 examples of this card style recorded.

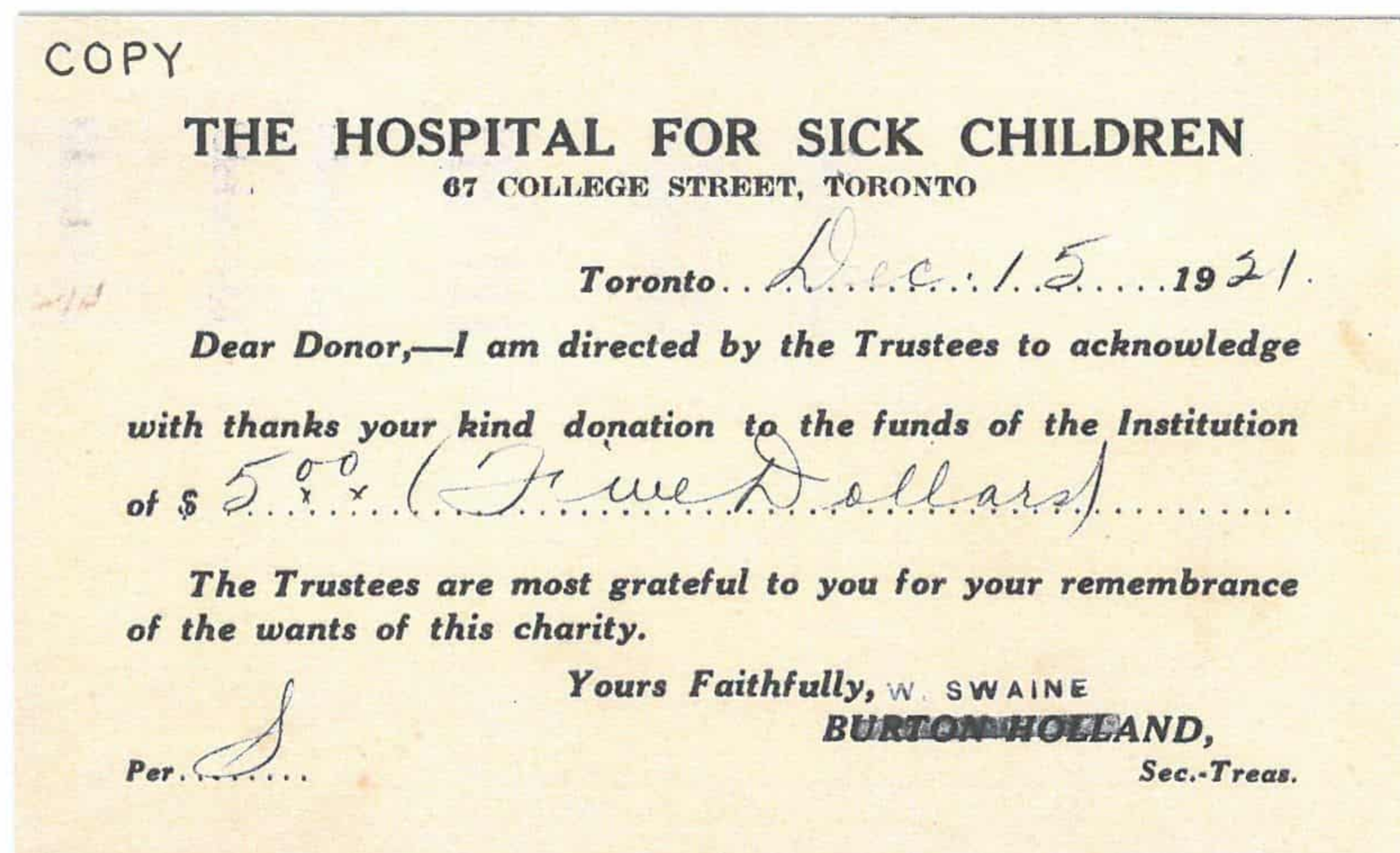


In 1921, the long-used illustration on the front was replaced with one of a smiling child with no religious overtones.



December 15, 1921 Universal machine slogan cancel.

Census: 6 examples of this card style recorded.



3.3 Transition to regular issue post cards

...marking the end of an era for the Hospital

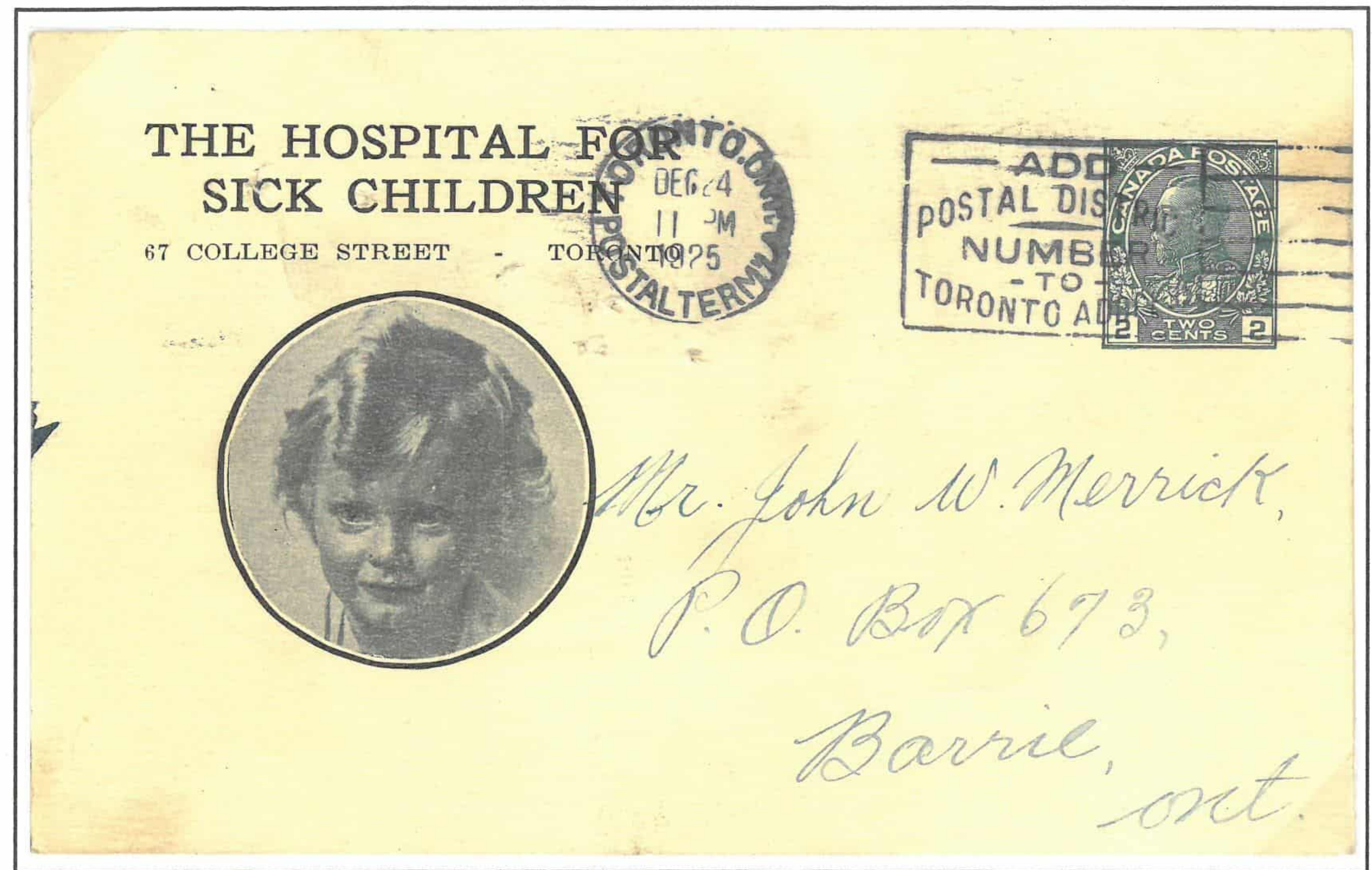
The Hospital continued to use private order post cards for its donation receipts until December 1925.

This post card was the last that had to be privately ordered by the Hospital. Regular issue post cards with no heading or address separation came into general use by early December 1925.

December 4, 1925 Universal machine slogan cancel.

Census: 4 examples of this card style recorded.

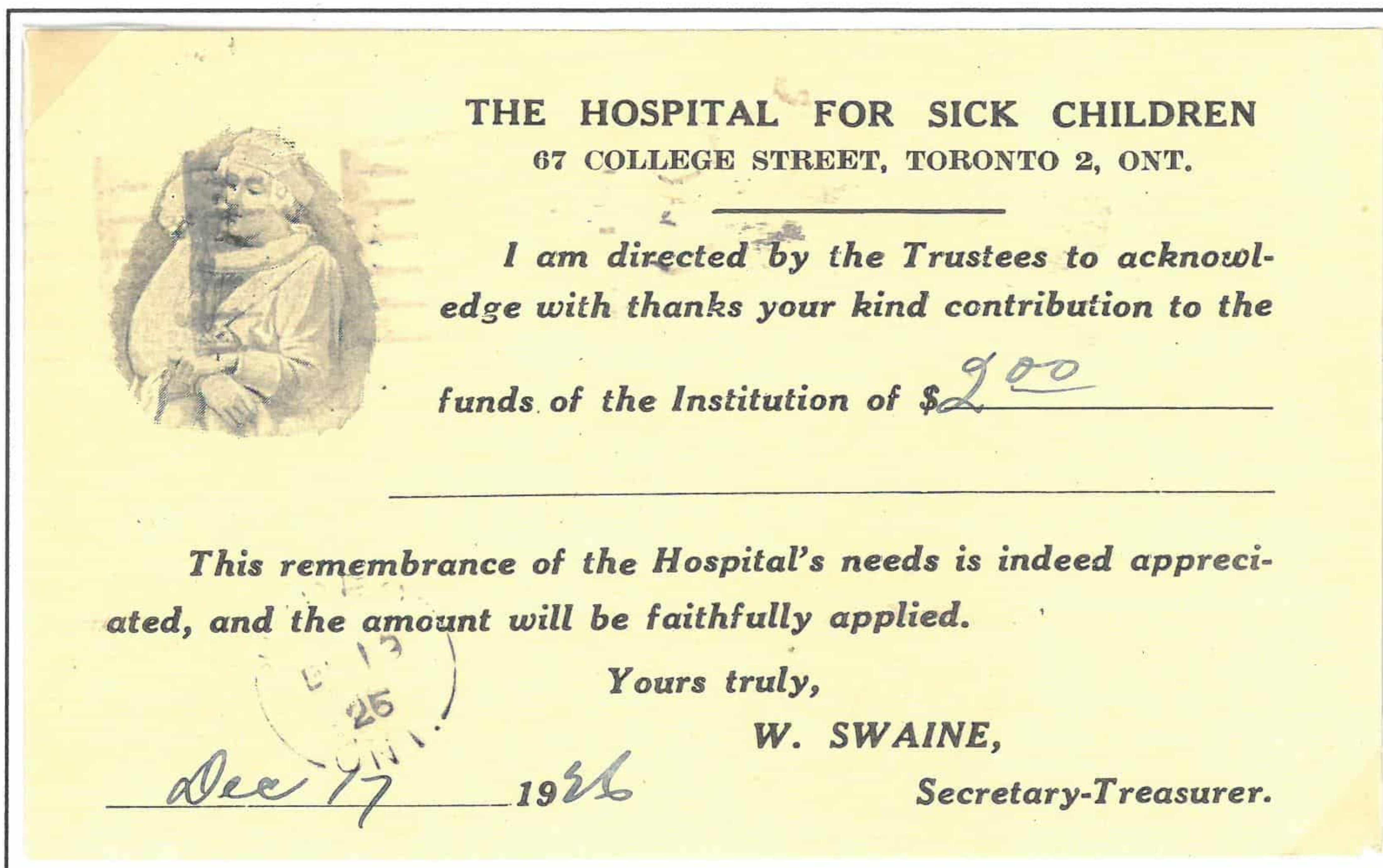
Notably, this was the first card to refer to the “needs of this Hospital” rather than the “wants of this Charity”, symbolically sealing the transformation from a Christian charity to a modern Hospital.



COPY

The Trustees are most grateful to you for your remembrance of the needs of this Hospital.

Eventually, the Hospital reverted to printing acknowledgement forms on the back of regular issue post cards with an image of a nurse and child but no picture on the front, bringing to an end the elaborate language and illustrations that had characterized its annual Christmas appeals for more than two decades.



COPY

December 17, 1926 Universal machine slogan cancel, Hydro split-ring receiver cds on the back (Hydro PO operated 1922 to 1939).

Epilogue. During the transformative years of the Hospital for Sick Children, John Ross Robertson's leadership and force of personality permeated its fundraising efforts, helping to support its growth into one of the world's leading institutions for pediatric treatment and research.