



# American Association for the History of Nursing Bulletin

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and Annemarie McAllister*



## President's Message Fall 2012

**A**s I contemplated writing my first "President's Message," I decided to scrutinize past issues of the *Bulletin* to garner ideas on how my predecessors handled this task. I discovered that it is a firm AAHN tradition at the end of each Annual Conference to proclaim it the "best one ever." Well, I can confidently state that the 2012 Savannah conference was definitely, absolutely, without a doubt, the best ever AAHN conference. The scholarship was stupendous, the food fantastic and the setting superb! Elaine Marshall and her Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) are to be commended and deserve a million kudos for a superlative job. Special



Jean Whelan



Elaine Marshall, Chair of the Savannah LAC

thanks go to members of the Georgia Southern University Continuing Education Staff, Marie Williams, Silke Ledlow and Eulaina (Laney) Turner. Faculty members Linda Upchurch, Christy Dubert, Marie Graf, Kathy Anderson, and Linda Littrell contributed greatly to bringing the conference to a successful conclusion. Mary Gibson, AAHN Program Chair worked diligently with the LAC in making the whole weekend an enjoyable experience. And, as was noted at the Association's business meeting, Elaine Marshall's husband John, who seemed to be everywhere patiently insuring a smooth running operation, also deserves our appreciation. It takes a great deal of work to organize the Annual Conference and the Association is extremely lucky to have members such as Elaine Marshall and her committee who were willing and able to do this so expertly

Approximately 120 individuals attended the conference. And, while the primary focus is on scholarship, it certainly added to the conference's success when the Association raised a good amount of funds. For that we need to thank our surprise guests, Scarlett 1 (Sandy Lewenson) and Scarlett 2 (Katherine Smith) O'Hara and their beau Rhett (Larry Herrmann) Butler. Annemarie McAllister was instrumental in keeping the two Scarletts and Rhett focused on their job which resulted in close to \$4000 raised between the silent and live auctions. Further,

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# American Association for the History of Nursing

10200 W. 44th Avenue, Suite 304  
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033

## Officers

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 Editor, *Bulletin* ..... Beth Ann Reedy  
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**10200 W. 44th Avenue, #304,  
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033**

**Phone: 303-422-2685 x122 Fax: 303-422-8894  
Email: aahn@aahn.org www.aahn.org**

Please send all *Bulletin* items:  
reports, short articles, and news to:

**Gertrude Hutchinson**  
*ghutchinson@fnysn.org*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Annemarie McAllister, Katherine Smith, Sandy Lewenson and Larry Herrmann after raising money for the AAHN Research Endowment Fund

the recently created Eleanor Krohn Herrmann (EKH) Memorial Lecture Fund received a large number of donations which Larry Herrmann generously offered to double. (We will have more on the exact amount currently in the EKH Fund in future issues of the Bulletin). Fittingly, this year's conference featured the first Eleanor Krohn Herrmann Keynote Address presented by Dr. Margaret Humphries of Duke University. Dr. Humphries excellent talk set a high tone for the rest of the conference. The Annual Conference also provides an opportunity to carry out the Association's business, welcome new members and thank those who have given of their time to the Association. During the Business meeting, President Brigid Lusk thanked out-going Board members Arlene Keeling, Barbara Brodie and Carol Daisy, Nominating Committee Chair Sandy Lewenson and Bulletin Editor Beth Ann Reedy for their service and introduced new Board members Mary Tarbox, Annemarie McAllister, Joan Lynaugh and Cynthia Connolly, Nominating Committee member Sylvia Rinker, and incoming Bulletin Editor Trudy Hutchinson. I want to personally thank Brigid for her time as President.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

We are an organization which relies heavily on the work of member volunteers and the President's position represents the ultimate volunteer job. Brigid has served ably, graciously and competently and for that we are indebted. I am tremendously grateful to Brigid, as she signs off and I sign on, in making everything so much easier during this transition period. Fortunately, Brigid will continue to serve on the Board as Past President so we are in good shape as the Association moves forward.

I turn now to a brief review of the state of the Association. The good news is that the AAHN is financially stable. Now, for the bad news. This year has seen a significant drop in membership. Maintaining membership rates has been challenging for the Association over the past few years, most likely a reflection of the economy and aging population base. There is no way to sugar coat this—we need new members and we need them fast. In the coming months the Board will examine this issue, but for the present, I urge everyone to invest some time in thinking about and sharing with us creative ways to recruit new individuals to membership.

In part to address this and many of the other issues facing the Association, prior to the conference, the Board held a daylong strategic planning session which resulted in generating a plethora of new ideas and strategies. As the Board shifts through the copious material produced at the strategic planning session, we will report periodically to the membership keeping you up to date on all the exciting new plans.

In terms of my vision for the next year, I have identified two projects I believe will strengthen and grow the Association.

The first was one highlighted by the Board at their Strategic Planning session and revolves around developing creative ways to portray the mission, image and goals of the Association.

Many of you are familiar with the term “branding”

and that is exactly what I am talking about. Branding is a way to identify the Association, its services, benefits and mission in a manner that differentiates and promotes the AAHN. The Board will engage in developing an innovative visual image of the Association that portrays a more modern, twenty-first century face to the public.

The second project concerns improving the Association's grant program. Several years ago, under the leadership of Past President Arlene Keeling, the AAHN instituted a program composed of two research grants, the H-15 Grant for faculty members and independent researchers and the H-31 Pre-doctoral Grant for graduate students training in historical research. Since 2008, these grants have provided our members with some welcome funds, including F & As (indirect costs), at a time when funding agencies are reducing their award amounts considerably. This program has been a tremendous success and I believe the time is ripe to consider ways for it to expand. The exact method taken to do so is to be determined, but stay tuned over the coming months as we begin work on this worthy project.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the Association for the faith placed in me in electing me president. I look forward to working with all of you over the next two years as we move the Association forward. Please share with me your ideas, suggestions, critiques and anything else you want me to know at [jewhelan@nursing.upenn.edu](mailto:jewhelan@nursing.upenn.edu). I think we have exciting times ahead as we grow, promote and advance the AAHN.

Best,

**Jean**



2012 AAHN Awardees Drs. Annemarie McAllister, Carol Helmstadter, Cynthia Connolly, Barbara Brodie (Award Committee Chair) and Barbra Mann Wall

## American Association for the History of Nursing 2012 Research and Writing Awards

**Barbara Brodie, PhD, RN, FAAN**

At its 29th annual conference, in Savannah, Georgia, the American Association for the History of Nursing awarded four awards to members for their outstanding scholarship. The distinguished Teresa E. Christy Award for Exemplary Historical Research and Writing in a Dissertation was awarded to Annemarie McAllister for her dissertation entitled *R. Louise Mc Manus and Mildred Montage Create the Associate Degree Model for the Education of Nurses: The Right Leaders, The Right Time, the Right Place 1947-1959*. Dr. McAllister studied the creation of a new model of nursing education, the community college associate degree in nursing. This program proved so successful that it quickly replaced the traditional way of educating student nurses in hospital based schools of nursing. Dr. McAllister is a practice manager in a cardiology office and a part-time instructor at Pace University School of Nursing.

The Lavinia L. Dock Award for Exemplary Historical Research and Writing in a book was awarded to Carol Helmstadter and Judith Godden for their work *Nursing Before Nightingale: 1850 – 1899* published by Ashgate Publishing Limited. In this work Helmstadter and Godden explore the practice of nurses in the early nineteenth century prior to Nightingale's founding of the famous St. Thomas Hospital's School of Nursing. Focusing on the activities of English Anglican sisters beginning in 1815, the authors' document the many contributions the sisters made in transforming nurses from ignorant and indifferent women to

intelligent and competent caregivers. The book dispels many of the myths that have cast Nightingale as the sole creator of modern professional nursing. Carol Helmstadter, formerly Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto publishes on nursing in the nineteenth century. Judith Godden, formerly Senior Lecturer in the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney and Honorary Associate of the Department of History is a professional historian specializing in the history of medicine.

The Mary Adelaide Nutting Award for Exemplary Historical Research and Writing in an article was awarded to Cynthia Connolly, Janet Golden and Benjamin Schneider for their work in "*A Startling New Chemotherapeutic Agent*": *Pediatric Infectious Disease and the Introduction of Sulfonamides at Baltimore's Sydenham Hospital* published in the *Bulletin of the History*

*of Medicine* (86, 1. 2012 66-93). This article creatively examined the intertwining of medicine, therapeutic pharmacology and the nursing of children when sulfonamides were first used in the treatment of infections. The researchers' deft use of the children's charts aided readers' understanding of how the efficiency of the drug was established and why it became the standard for future studies on penicillin once it was introduced. Cynthia Connolly is an Associate Professor in the School of Nursing University of Pennsylvania, Janet Golden is a Professor of History at Rutgers University, and Benjamin Schneider is a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania.

The AAHN's fourth and newest award, the Mary M. Roberts Award recognizes the exemplary talents of nurse historians to create a book of edited readings that focus on

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Dr. Annemarie McAllister received the Teresa E. Christy Award from Awards Committee Chair Dr. Barbara Brodie

## RESEARCH AND WRITING AWARDS – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

pertinent nursing issues and events. Barbra Mann Wall and Arlene Keeling's book *Nurses on the Front Line. When Disaster Strikes 1878 – 2010* was selected for the award. The articles selected for the book covers a wide range of disasters including a hurricane, mine explosion, night club fire, earthquake and the 1917 flu epidemic. The disasters reveal both the advances in medicine that allowed nurses and physicians to better manage the medical needs of victims and the courage of these professionals to work in dangerous and chaotic conditions. Barbra Mann Wall is an Associate Professor in the School of Nursing University of Pennsylvania and Arlene Keeling is a Professor in the School of Nursing University of Virginia. Congratulations to all the 2012 awardees. We look

forward to receiving future submissions for the awards next year. Detailed information regarding all AAHN Awards including submission due dates can be found on the AAHN web site: [www.aahn.org](http://www.aahn.org).



Dr. Arlene Keeling and Dr. Barbra Mann Wall receive the Mary M. Roberts Award from Awards Committee Chair Dr. Barbara Brodie

## Call For Abstracts

### American Association for the History of Nursing Thirtieth Annual History of Nursing Conference Cleveland, Ohio September 26-29, 2013

The American Association for the History of Nursing and the Cleveland Clinic, are co-sponsoring the Association's thirtieth annual conference to be held in Cleveland, Ohio. The conference provides a forum for researchers interested in sharing new research that addresses events, issues, and topics pertinent to the history of the global nursing profession, its clinical practice, and the field of nursing history. Individual papers, posters, and panel presentations are featured at the conference. Additional information about AAHN and the conference can be obtained at [www.aahn.org](http://www.aahn.org).

**Guidelines for Submission:** A one-page abstract of a completed study will be accepted by email. Submit two copies of your abstract; one must include the title, study, author's name(s), credentials, institutional affiliation, phone/fax and email. Indicate whether a paper, poster, or panel presentation is sought. The second copy of the abstract should include only the title, study, and mode of presentation with no other identifying information. If more than one author is listed, indicate who is serving as the contact person.

**Abstracts must include:** Purpose of study, rationale and significance, description of methodology, identification of major primary and

secondary sources, findings and conclusions. Each section of the abstract should be clearly identified. Abstracts will be selected on the basis of merit through blind review.

**Abstract preparation:** Margins must be one and one-half inches on the left, and one inch on the right, top, and bottom. Center the title in upper case, and single space the body using 12 point Times (New Roman) font. Accepted abstracts will be printed as submitted in the conference program; thus, when printed, the abstract must fit one side of one 8.5" x 11" paper.

**Submission date:** Abstracts must arrive on or before January 15, 2013. Late abstracts will not be reviewed.

Submit to: [Abstracts@AAHN.org](mailto:Abstracts@AAHN.org).

All conference presenters must be AAHN members.

# Report on the Annual Research Conference

## Concurrent Sessions • Savannah – 2012

Linda Sabin, PhD, RN

This year's conference was well worth the effort to travel to Savannah, Georgia. Participants were treated to a wealth of quality research, as well as wonderful fun and fellowship with colleagues. Presenters from across the country and around the world gave fabulous talks on cutting edge historical scholarship. Research questions addressed encompassed clinical, theoretical, institutional and leadership topics useful to all the participants. Below are presented brief summaries of a sampling of the sessions.

### Challenges in Women's Health

**“Listen to Those Tales of Individual Misery and Give Help of the Right Sort:” The Private Lives and Personal Tragedies of the Midwife-Nurses Selected to Work in the First Birth Control Clinic in England.**

**Dr. Pauline Brand**, The Open University in England, opened the session with a colorful and insightful presentation on Midwife-Nurses who served in the pioneer birth control clinics in England from 1921-1926. Using primary source material, Dr. Brand created an image of the practice, the social setting and the lives of these early leaders in birth control services in England. The nurses made a significant contribution to their community in a contested specialty and coped with personal tragedies in their own lives.

**Contextualizing the Women's Health Movement of the 1970's and 1980's: Nurses as Activists.**

**Linda Maldonado**, doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania, presented a study that described the lived experience of African American women based on the events related to the Maternity Care Coalition of Midwives in Philadelphia in the 1970's and 1980's. This case study demonstrated that the involvement of activist nurse midwives with

community residents resulted in successful collaboration. These nurses practiced in an area marked by high infant mortality rates and problems with access to services during a volatile period of change in health care. This study illustrated the positive outcomes of professional/consumer collaboration to change outcomes in health services.

**The First National Health Care Mandate: Eugenics, Maternal Health Policy and the Social Security Act of 1935.**

**Dr. Bonnie Pope's**, University of North Florida, study was on the work of nursing and the social influence of eugenic policies established from 1890-1930 and their impact on the Social Security Act of 1935. Dr. Pope traced the development of eugenics and social policy through the Gilded Age and Progressive Era to demonstrate how these developments shaped the inclusions and exclusions in the Social Security Act of 1935. She demonstrated how the intention of the Social Security Act to provide economic security for all citizens was not realized. Further, Dr. Pope argued that the language of the law created barriers for the most vulnerable in society. She concluded that current day health care disparities can be traced to some of the tenets in this 1935 law.

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Mary Gibson, Anne Cockerham, Gray Cockerham and Arlene Keeling enjoying a moment at the AAHN conference

CONCURRENT SESSIONS — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

**Providing Rural Health Care**

**“Instruction in First-Aid, Hygiene, and Childcare:”  
Nursing the Migrants in Belle Glade Florida, 1935-1943.**

**Dr. Arlene Keeling**, University of Virginia, provided an analysis of the role of nurses working under the Farm Security Administration to care for migrant workers and farm families in Belle Glade Florida, 1935-1943. Dr. Keeling described a grim profile of life during the Great Depression for the workers in Belle Glade; workers who had migrated from drought-devastated areas in the Midwest. Their needs were serious and the program of nursing intervention was shaped by social and economic issues of the time. Health care and nursing services, delivered along racial lines, reflected the strong influence of Jim Crow laws in the South. Yet, despite grave conditions, the nurses demonstrated that primary care made a difference for the target population.

**From the Trunk of a Volkswagen Beetle: A Mobile  
Nursing Clinic in Appalachia**

**Dr. Esther Thatcher** together with **Audrey Snyder**, both of the University of Virginia, presented a study on the care of Appalachian families via a roving health wagon in the 1980’s-1990’s. The study was based on traditional historical methods and included oral histories of nurses who created and carried out the program. Sister Bernadette Kenny, member of the Medical Missionaries of Mary, was the early leader of this effort. She led nurse practitioners, community support networks and granting agencies in the effort to provide health care in a rural setting where access was a major problem. This colorful story of a Volkswagen Beetle,

which provided access to care, provides insight and thought for health policies today.

**“No Territory Uncovered and No People Uncared For:”  
Rural Health Care in the Frontier Nursing Service.**

**Dr. Anne Cockerham**, Frontier Nursing University, ended this session with a study on the geographic, cultural and professional challenges that the Frontier Nursing Service faced in building their practice in Kentucky from 1925-mid-1950’s. Using primary sources and material culture, Dr. Cockerham depicted the life and struggles of the pioneer nurses who ventured into the rural mountainous area of Eastern Kentucky and the ways in which they made a difference in the lives of the population they served. She identified that nurses not only provided services, but also successfully engaged in fundraising efforts. These early nurses led by Mary Breckinridge were skilled at practice, soliciting support and community education throughout their history.

**Meeting the Needs**

**Southern Public Health Nurses in the Mid-20th Century  
Venereal Disease Control**

**Dr. Janna Dieckmann**, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, presented a study on the role of public health nurses as it changed in the mid-1950’s in the South within the context of health care disparities and racial segregation. The foundation for the study was an analysis of a 7-day working conference for public health nurses held in 1954 on Venereal Disease (VD) control. The federal reduction

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Dr. Sandy Lewenson with Dr. Annemarie McAllister, Teresa E. Christy Award recipient



AAHN President Brigid Lusk and Board Member Rusty Lusk taking a break at the AAHN conference

in VD control funding led states to expand the role of public health nurses into VD interviewing and case investigation. This working conference educated many southern public health nurses, including several African American nurses, breaking the color barrier still prevalent in the South. This conference demonstrated change that would continue into future.

**“He that Receiveth One Such Little Child in My Name Receiveth Me:” The Cause of Suffering Children in Seattle, 1907-1920.**

**Dr. Mary Gibson**, University of Virginia, presented a unique study on the origins of the care of poor children with orthopedic disabilities in Seattle (1907-1920). She traced the efforts of Anna Clise to establish a facility for children. Clise had lost a child, Willis, who died of inflammatory rheumatic disease years before. The story of the hospital reflected the social times and economic realities faced by women. Lillian Carter, the first nurse hired by the hospital, was trained locally and subsequently traveled to New York for a post-graduate course. This story reflects the collaborative efforts of wealthy donors and nurses to provide necessary care to children. As well, it identifies an example of transnational ideas and care practices.

## Religious and International Missions

**Building a Foundation for Health and Equity: The Work of Methodist Missionaries in the Development of a Japanese Hospital, Steveston, British Columbia, Canada 1880-1920.**

**Helen Vanderberg**, doctoral student at the University of British Columbia, described the efforts of Methodist Missionaries in the development and operation of a Japanese hospital in Steveston, British Columbia at the

turn of the 20th century. The social and ethnic conditions of this region were described as a backdrop for the development of the hospital. Japanese workers faced discrimination in this rural fishing town. Japanese families lived in a segregated area and the work of men and women were separate. Japanese clergy were successful in enabling several of the Japanese women to enter nurses training. The Methodist church was one place in the community which operated without discrimination. The hospital, whose beginnings were as a mission house, subsequently grew into a modern facility which would not have been as successful without the missionaries who gave time, effort and resources to the project.

**“The Motherhouse Made All the Difference:” A History of the Milwaukee Lutheran Deaconesses, 1849-1911.**

**Dr. Lisa M. Zerull**, Academic Liaison/Program Manager, Faith Based Services, Valley Health, presented a study on the Milwaukee Lutheran Deaconesses (1849-1911); highlighting their achievements and describing the process it took for these women who followed the Kaiserswerth model to achieve a motherhouse for their organization. Dr. Zerull focused on the contributions of the Deaconesses in the Civil War and during epidemics. She noted that the Institution of Protestant Deaconesses did not initially provide a motherhouse for the women seeking to pursue the ministry of Deaconess and this slowed the development of the Milwaukee chapter. She also observed that only 10 Deaconesses were consecrated between 1849 and 1893 and that without a motherhouse the women experienced social isolation. Once the motherhouse was established,

growth of the community improved and an infrastructure of permanence was erected to support the sisters. The study provided a view of the influence of race, denomination and organizational development in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## Nursing Experiences in World War

**French Soldiers’ Letters to Their American Nurses: Content of Correspondence in the World War I Era**

**Dr. Marjorie DesRosier**, University of Washington, reported on her study of correspondence sent to Alice F. Stewart, a World War I nurse who served in France, from French soldiers for whom she cared. Dr. DesRosier’s study was based on 311 identified French soldier-patients’ post-hospitalization correspondence with Stewart. Stewart returned to the US after the war and went on to distinguish herself as a nursing administrator in Augusta but saved the letters which were later donated to a library in Augusta, Georgia. As part of the study, 162 hand written French language letters and postcards dated from 1916-1919 were translated and compiled into English. The letters were analyzed for themes that included the soldiers’ feelings about Stewart as a mother figure and confidant. They also expressed memories of her caring for them during the trauma of war injuries and hospitalization. This window into the experiences and outcomes of the practice of a contract nurse in a French Military hospital during World War I illuminates the ways in which nursing services were delivered during wartime.

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**CONCURRENT SESSIONS —  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8**

**“From Within the Ashes:” American Nursing and the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission.**

**Dr. Adrian Melissinos** presented a study of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission which was established in Japan following the detonation of the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Dr. Melissinos gave an overview of the purpose of the commission and then highlighted the role of American nurses involved in the Commission, by profiling nurse Louise Cavignaro who led the nursing effort in the centers doing the long-term studies on the survivors of the bombing. American nurses played a major educational role in preparing Japanese nurses to gather data on the survivors. The nurses also conducted many screenings and home visits to those exposed to radiation. This commission followed the 280,000 survivors clinically. The study on survivors continues today.

**“The Greatest Potential for Reform:” The Vassar Nurse Training Camp, 1918.**

**Katharine T. Smith**, doctoral student, University of Pennsylvania, discussed a study describing the motivations which led Vassar College Trustees, administrators and alumnae to establish a program to train college educated women as professional nurses during World War I. This program known as the Vassar Training Camp was developed through a collaborative effort between the Vassar College Board of Trustees, the Red Cross and the nurse led Council of Nursing Defense. Smith traced the organizational and societal issues impacting the operations of the Training Camp. Her study found that the camp offered administrators, trustees and powerful alumnae of the

college an opportunity to support the war effort as well as identifying college educated women as a specific population suited to carry out reform

of nurse training schools. Many future leaders for the nursing profession were prepared through this experiment that fit the times.

## President Lusk Announces President’s Award

**A**t the Savannah Annual Conference, President Brigid Lusk announced that Dr. Patricia D’Antonio was the winner of the 2012 American Association for the History of Nursing’s President’s Award. The President’s Award recognizes sustained and distinguished service to the Association. In her remarks, AAHN Brigid Lusk noted Dr. D’Antonio’s successful editorship of the *Nursing History Review (NHR)*, the premier journal dedicated to disseminating scholarship on nursing and health care history. Dr. Lusk noted that the *NHR* is the “jewel of the Association,” and that under Dr. D’Antonio’s leadership the prestige of the journal has soared. In addition, Dr. D’Antonio has been a strong supporter and advocate for the AAHN. In her gracious acceptance, Dr. D’Antonio noted that she is not often at a loss for words, but the surprise of being so honored left her temporarily speechless! Pat did go on to note how grateful she was for the recognition the Association afforded her. Congratulations to Pat on this impressive distinction.



Dr. Patricia D’Antonio receives the President’s Award from AAHN President Brigid Lusk

*The following accounting of the AAHN live auction was forwarded to the editor of the Bulletin in an anonymous e-mail. Since it seemed relevant, we publish it in its entirety (or the entirety that the editor thought pertinent).*

## An Account of the Late Proceedings in the City of Savannah, September 1864, 2012 (publisher's correction)



Scarlett O'Hara 2 (AKA Katherine Smith) holding auction item

When we heard that the 29th Annual AAHN meeting was to be held in Savannah, Georgia, the intrepid auctioneers (and several members) immediately thought of the loss of their plantation. It was "Gone With the Wind." Every year the nurses from far and wide come together to learn from each other. At the Saturday night feast, an auction is held, which aims to warm up the crowd and support the Research Endowment awards. (Ed. note: Could this be similar to a dowry??) The auctioneers, who typically dress in costumes and portray historical characters (or vegetables, depending on the year), rallied around the southern theme and began to plan costumes, music, and skit. They asked, "Who could play the infamous role of Rhett Butler or the southern belle, Scarlett O'Hara?" These questions were easily answered! Of course, none other than a rather tall gentleman who fancied himself Butler volunteered to play this dashing role. He looked quite debonair (as ever) in top hat and mustache, as he guided the two Scarlett O'Hara's... Yes, two... a newcomer to the auction scene, a Miss K.S. (a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania – a Yankee institution!!) and an older, more seasoned (aging) auctioneer, from that outpost of

Yankeeess, New York City, a Ms. S.L. The auctioneers were introduced by another newcomer to the auction circuit, Dr. A.M.M. (newly awarded her doctoral degree, from Columbia University, and recipient of the Teresa Christy Award – what is it with all these Yankees?!?!). Walking into the dining room to the theme song of *Gone With the Wind* (expertly played through the loud speaker by John Marshall), the auctioneers swept into the room and began their brief skit (auction, auction, auction). And Rhett's famous lines... "Frankly Scarlett, I don't give a..." and began to sell. Auctioning off items such as a hand-crafted quilt, nursing capes and uniforms, urinals (in a room just full of ladies!!), dolls, tours, and other historical relics, the crowd responded in glorious fashion, raising several thousands of dollars (in addition to the silent auction held earlier that day). One of the highlights of the event is when the auctioneers auctioned off "nothing," a treat for any one who wanted to buy something, but not have to carry it home! (Yes there was a bidding war for "nothing"). The members actually bid against each other, raising the money for the Endowment Fund. The AAHN auction is a highlight and something that translates to more historical research. A win-win event! And, who knows what next year will bring when we meet again in Cleveland, which is situated somewhere west of here. The auctioneers anticipate the need to acquire new horses and wagons for that adventure. Any inquiries (or donations for the horses) may be made to Mr. Lawrence Herrmann, Dr. Sandra Lewenson, Ms. Katharine Smith, or Dr. Anne Marie Mc Allister. They all apparently communicate by something called 'e-mail'. The writer of this missive believes this may stand for 'elephant' mail but seems to be a much slower form than the pony express.



Scarlett O'Hara 2 (AKA Katherine Smith) , Rhett Butler (AKA Larry Herrmann) and Scarlett O'Hara 1 (AKA Sandy Lewenson) raise money

# The First *Registered* Nurse in the United States: Josephine (Bradham) Burton

Phoebe Pollitt, PhD, RN

For over a hundred years the story and even the name of the first registered nurse (RN) in the United States has been inaccurately reported and shrouded in mystery. Nurse Mary Rose Batterham went to her grave in 1927, 24 years after she registered her nursing credentials with the Buncombe County Clerk of Court, mistakenly believing and widely honored as the first RN in the United States. Meanwhile Josephine (Bradham) Burton, who was most likely truly the nation's first registered nurse, probably never knew she deserved that accolade.

On March 3, 1903, the North Carolina State Nurse Association (NCSNA) became the first nursing organization to successfully lobby their state legislature to pass a nurse registration act in the United States. The law allowed nurses to place their names in a county registry of trained nurses by appearing before the Clerk of Court in the county in which they wished to practice after presenting their diploma from a reputable training school. The Clerk of Court then issued the nurse a Certificate of Registration and entered her name in the Nurses Registry kept in each county courthouse. Nurse registration under the new law began in each of North Carolina's ninety nine counties on June 5th, 1903.

Members of the NCSNA agreed that Batterham, a North Carolinian nursing leader should receive the honor of being the first registered nurse in North Carolina and therefore in the United States. Batterham was a leading advocate in the battle to pass the nurse registration law. (See "Mary Rose Batterham: The Second Registered Nurse in the United States" in this edition of *The Bulletin*). North Carolina nurses wanted to recognize Batterham's work on behalf of the NCSNA and nurses across the state. The Clerk of Court in Batterham's home county of Buncombe opened his office an hour early on June 5th, 1903 to ensure her place in history. For the remainder of her life, Batterham was honored in print, including in the *American Journal of Nursing*, in professional and civic meetings, and in her 1927 eulogy, as the first RN in the US.

A decade later, in 1938, Bessie Chapman, Secretary of the North Carolina Board of Nurse Examiners, as part of an effort to centralize the database containing nurse registration information, wrote to each Clerk of Court in North Carolina asking for a list of nurses who had registered in their county since 1903. Chapman was

most likely greatly surprised when she received a letter from L.E. Lancaster, Clerk of Court for Craven County, informing her that Josephine Burton appeared before the Craven County Clerk of Court with a diploma from the Philadelphia Hospital (renamed Philadelphia General Hospital in 1902) and was registered on June 4th, 1903. This was, one day before Nurse Batterham registered in Buncombe County.

Chapman was not familiar with the name or the career of Josephine Burton.

She queried older nurses in the NCSNA, none of whom knew of Burton either. In an effort to clear up the mystery, Chapman wrote to Loretta Johnson, Director of Nursing at Burton's alma mater, Philadelphia General Hospital. Chapman asked Johnson for information concerning Burton. Johnson replied quickly, "We have heard nothing from Mrs. Burton since the date she left the hospital". Philadelphia General Hospital records revealed that Burton gave her home address as New Bern (Craven County), North Carolina and her nearest relative as her brother Dr. C.D. Bradham of the same town. Since there were no employment records, census data or even death certificate related to Josephine Burton in Craven County, the trail to find out more about her grew cold and the mystery surrounding the first RN in the US remained.

Recent archival research has uncovered more information about Burton. Burton was born in 1875 in the small town of Chinquapin in Duplin County, NC. She was the daughter of George Washington and Julia Sheffield Bradham. On July 3, 1894, at age 19, she married Joel Burton also of Duplin County. Four and a half years later, Burton entered nurses training at Philadelphia Hospital on March 1, 1899 and graduated on April 1, 1902. While Burton was in nursing school in Philadelphia, her brother, Caleb D. Bradham, started a pharmacy in New Bern, (Craven County) NC and is credited as being the inventor of Pepsi Cola. It is likely that after graduation, Burton, still married but soon to be divorced from her husband, moved to New Bern to live near her brother. As a recent graduate of one of the country's finest nursing schools, Burton must have followed the debate about the nurse registration act in the North Carolina legislature. As the County Clerk's records indicate, once the act passed, Burton presented her

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diploma to the local Clerk of Court's office and became the first registered nurse in North Carolina and thus the nation. There is no evidence that Burton, her brother Mr. Bradham, the Clerk of Court or anyone else was aware of Burton's new status.

Burton was divorced by 1910 and reverted to her maiden name until her death from complications after surgery in New York City in 1917. She is buried in the family plot in New Bern under the name Josephine Bradham. No evidence exists that Burton ever practiced nursing or was active in any nursing organizations. While information on Burton is

sparse what is known leads to several suppositions. It was rare in the late 1800s for a young woman from rural North Carolina to leave her family and live in another part of the country, yet Burton had the gumption to go to Philadelphia to pursue her career goal. She was bright, dedicated and hard working enough to graduate from one of the best nursing schools in the country. Further, she was savvy enough to keep up with current events and register at the Clerk of Courts office in accordance with the provisions of the new North Carolina Nurse Practice Act. Josephine Bradham Burton occupies an impressive position as the first

registered nurse in the United States. Her story illuminates an important period in nursing history.

*Editor's note—For further information about North Carolina nursing history please visit <http://nursinghistory.appstate.edu/about>*

*For those interested in further researching the story of Josephine Bradham Burton, the Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing holds the student records of the Burton's alma mater, Philadelphia General Hospital. For information on the Bates Center please visit <http://www.nursing.upenn.edu/history/Pages/default.aspx>.*

## Mary Rose Batterham: The Second Registered Nurse in the United States

**Phoebe Pollitt, PhD, RN**

**T**ribute must always be given to the pioneers and leading spirits in any organization. They pave the way and make it easier for those who follow". Mary Rose Batterham, RN (n.d.)

Mary Rose Batterham spent her first decade as a nurse battling everything from typhoid epidemics to state legislators. She was a remarkable woman possessing a range of abilities which included assisting in surgeries performed on kitchen tables in Appalachian mountain cabins, writing and speaking persuasively to numerous organizations to promote nursing practice and education, displaying leadership qualities as an elected representative of her fellow nurses, and working with imagination and resourcefulness to help create the new profession of nursing (Bullough, Sentz & Stein, 1992; Kaufman, 1988). She was one of the founders of the North Carolina State Nurses Association (NCSNA), joining a group of women whom Batterham later characterized as: "...nurses, making history, constructionists, and iconoclasts, destroying the old conception of the graduate nurse and raising the trained woman to the dignity of a professional woman." (Batterham, n.d., Nursing record of "firsts", 1926)

### Early Life

Batterham was born in Walsoken, Norfolk County, England in 1858. In 1881 her family immigrated to Asheville, NC. Although Batterham wanted to practice nursing, no nursing schools operated in North Carolina at that time causing Batterham to travel to New York where in 1893 she graduated from the Brooklyn City Hospital School of Nursing. After graduation, she secured a position as a nurse for the policy holders of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and returned to Asheville ("Miss Batterham tenderly buried", 1927, "Weaver, Brown and Batterham", 1960).

Upon her return to Asheville, Batterham found she was in great demand as a private duty nurse, the main occupational field in which nurses of the time worked. At the time of her arrival home, the first hospitals in Asheville were just emerging and only one operating room in the city existed. Most surgeries, both major and minor, were performed in patients' homes. Later Batterham would recall in detail the role of the nurse in home surgeries,

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## THE SECOND REGISTERED NURSE IN THE UNITED STATES — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

describing how the nurse often arrived prior to surgery to clean the house and the patient, boil instruments and prepare a supply of extra water on a wood stove, and use the bed, dining room table or most often a kitchen table as an operating table. The nurse, working in conjunction with the surgeon, carried out whatever was required such as assisting at the surgery and administering anesthetics. Once the surgeon completed the procedure, the nurse often stayed behind to watch over the patient's recuperation and clean up the surroundings ("Weaver, Brown and Batterham", 1960).

### Organizing North Carolina Nurses

In 1900, a typhoid epidemic swept through the student body at North Carolina Women's College in Greensboro, NC. College officials sent out a call for graduate nurses to help them cope with the outbreak. Graduate nurse from across the state volunteered to help, many of whom stayed for several weeks as the epidemic ran its course. During their leisure hours the nurses discussed issues related to nursing practice, education and regulation. Batterham and Mary Lewis Wyche, an 1894 graduate of the prestigious Philadelphia Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, were two of these "Greensboro" nurses. In the months after the epidemic Wyche wrote to all of the "Greensboro" nurses and other nurses she knew in North Carolina asking them to send representatives to a state wide meeting in Raleigh, the state capitol. The purpose of the meeting was to determine the amount of interest in organizing a state nurse association with the main aim of working towards passage of a nurse registration law (Kaufman, 1988; Wyche, M.L., 1938).

Thirty-five nurses met in Asheville to consider the plan and elected to send Batterham as their representative to the Raleigh meeting. When she arrived in Raleigh, Batterham joined fifteen other nurses attending the meeting which resulted in the organization of the NCSNA in October, 1902. Wyche was elected President of the new organization and Batterham was elected first Vice President (Batterham, n.d.).

Work carried out on the second day of the Raleigh meeting centered on

drafting a nursing registration bill which was introduced in the State Legislature in January, 1903 and passed by the House as written by the nurses. However, by the time the bill arrived at the State Senate, a group of doctors and hospital administrators organized opposition. A weakened bill, without mandatory registration, passed the Senate and was signed by Governor Aycock on March 3, 1903. Despite the weakness of the law, the North Carolina Nurse Registration

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## The 2nd Agnes Dillon Randolph International Nursing History Conference, March 15-16, 2013

The University of Virginia School of Nursing,  
The Eleanor Crowder Bjoring Center for  
Nursing Historical Inquiry and Beta Kappa  
Chapter Sigma Theta Tau  
Charlottesville, Virginia

**Keynote Speaker: Barbara Brodie, PhD, RN, FAAN,**

In recognition of the diversity and quality of nursing scholarship across the world, the University of Virginia School of Nursing Eleanor Crowder Bjoring Center for Nursing Historical Inquiry is hosting its second Agnes Dillon Randolph International Nursing History Conference. The University of Virginia, designed by Thomas Jefferson, is a dedicated World Heritage Site for its historical architectural design and a premier educational and research institution.

A variety of nursing history presentations by researchers from around the world will be featured in the conference. The conference will be held in the University of Virginia School of Nursing.

The conference begins on Friday, March 15th with registration and refreshments at 11:30 a.m. The keynote is at 1:00 p.m. The conference concludes on Saturday, March 16th, at 3:00 p.m.

For more information, contact The University of Virginia School of Nursing at: [nurs-hxc@virginia.edu](mailto:nurs-hxc@virginia.edu) or by phone: (434) 924-0083.

Act stands as the first law regulating nursing practice in the United States, defining the legal criteria required for an individual to use the title “Registered Nurse”. Nurses meeting the specified criteria after presenting documentation to the Clerk of Court in the county in which they wished to practice were listed in a Nurses Registry kept in each county court house and made available to the public (North Carolina Bill, 1907, Wyche, 1938, Pollitt & Miller, 2010).

The nurses of the NCSNA agreed that Batterham should have the distinction of being the first nurse to register in the state. By prior arrangement, and in honor of the work and dedication that Batterham showed to the people of Asheville and Buncombe County, the Clerk of Court of Buncombe County opened his office an hour early on the day nurse registration began to ensure that Batterham would be recognized as the first registered nurse in North Carolina and therefore the first registered nurse in the United States (“Miss Rose Batterham, 1927; Who’s who, 1926).

### Later Career

Over the next 24 years, until her death in 1927, Batterham continuously proved her dedication to the profession and her service to her fellow citizens actively promoting professional progress and better access to health care services. Numerous talks that she delivered on a wide range of issues testify to her advocacy for better health care.

In a speech to the 1922 session of the NCSNA, later printed as a letter to the editor in the February 1923 issue of American Journal of Nursing (AJN), Batterham addressed what was a contentious issue among nurses urging her fellow private duty nurses to broaden their practices by

volunteering and working along with public health nurses. She noted:

We can enjoy a day with the county nurse, helping with the school or office work, also giving clinical demonstrations and lectures, at the same time learning practical engineering and how to run a car. Why should the private nurse not be educators? What are they doing to interest people in the many homes they enter? Do they ever speak of welfare work or civic needs, of the unnecessary deaths among women and children in the rural districts and of the undernourished school children? Why, no other class of women has so great an opportunity to interest influential people as has the private nurse... the offspring of unborn generations will arise and bless the public health nurse, in the time when perfect health shall cover the world as the waters cover the sea (Batterham, 1923).

In a 1920 speech to the Federated Women’s Clubs of Asheville she supported the passage of the Sheppard Towner Act which provided funding for nurses to work in the maternal child health field. As she explained to her audience, her support was based on her own experience in caring for mothers and children.

I have been in homes where conditions would make an angel weep; a new born baby and a mother attended by a lady whose chief pretention to cleanliness was a clean apron, taken off after the doctor left; a hatchet under the bed or a knife under the pillow to cut the pains; and not a sheet or clean gown in the house. Is it any wonder we lose 18,000 mothers and 300,000 babies every year? (Batterham, 1920)

In addition to her advocacy for the public’s health she worked to upgrade the nursing profession. As noted, Batterham helped craft the first nurse registration bill and later

was involved in several of the act’s revisions. She lobbied for mandatory registration for nurses; a law which did not pass in NC until 1965. As well, she campaigned for shorter hours, better pay and working and living conditions for nurses. Not satisfied with asking others to make changes she envisioned, in 1919, Batterham organized a Nurses Clubhouse in Asheville. Private duty nurses, including Batterham, lived in the Clubhouse between cases and all nurses were welcome to come to social and professional events sponsored by the Clubhouse (Bullough, Stenz & Stein, 1992; Nursing records, 1926, “Weaver, Brown and Batterham, 1960).

Upon Batterham’s death, her body lay in state at the Nurses Clubhouse and her pallbearers were her nursing colleagues in full uniform. In her obituary, The Asheville Citizen newspaper wrote:

For nearly thirty five years Miss Mary Rose Batterham was a ministering angel to the people of this town ... for more than a generation, here among us, she stood valiant in the presence of pestilence, and fought to defeat pain and to conquer disease and to cheat death its untimely prey. Hers was the good fight, not for glory or gain, but, with mercy and compassion as her weapons, to disarm grief in its agony and tears” (Miss Batterham tenderly, 1927).

Batterham was recognized many times as the first registered nurse in the United States through articles in the AJN and the Asheville Citizen (Miss Rose Batterham, 1927; Who’s who, 1926). It was only in 1935 when the lists of the County Nursing Registries in North Carolina were sent to the state capitol for central keeping that it was discovered that a different

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nurse, Josephine Burton of Craven County, had registered on June 4th, 1903 prior to Batterham's registration. Little is known about nurse Burton (Wyche, 1938). (see article The First Registered Nurse in the United States: Josephine (Burton) Bradham, this issue).

So, it turns out that Mary Rose Batterham was not actually the first registered nurse in the United States, a distinction held by another North Carolina nurse. Yet, Batterham's work as an organizer, writer, speaker, advocate, and nurse stands as a more important testament to her impressive career. Batterham's work in improving the quality of life for the public and for nurses represents a significant contribution to the profession and the well-

being of her fellow citizens. Her story is an illuminating reminder of how much nurses did and continue to contribute to our nation's health care services.

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## AAHN Call for Nominations

The 2013 Nominating Committee, Co-Chaired by Sylvia Rinker and Melissa Sherrod, is looking for candidates to be on the next ballot of AAHN leadership positions as follows:

- 2nd Vice President, Chair, Program
- Secretary
- Director, Chair, Publications
- Director, Member, Finance
- Director, Member, Strategic Planning
- Two Nominating Committee Members

Please note, all positions are for 2-year terms. If you would like to nominate someone, or yourself, please visit the AAHN Members Only section of the website at [www.aahn.org](http://www.aahn.org) and complete the Biographical Data Form under Nominations. **The deadline to receive nominations is April 15, 2013.**





Brianna Ralston, Julie Fairman, Winifred Connerton and Joan Lynaugh (center) enjoying the AAHN Conference banquet



Annemarie McAllister, Rita Chow and Sandy Lewenson enjoying the AAHN scholarly sessions

American Association  
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History of Nursing  
10200 W. 44th Avenue, Suite 304  
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033

