

November 2004

Margaret Allemang Centre
for the History of Nursing

NEWSLETTER

Feature Article

FLORENCE EMORY: REMINISCENCES OF A CONSUMMATE PROFESSIONAL

By Lynn Kirkwood, RN (Ret), PhD

As we begin to reflect on the first one hundred years of professional nursing in Canada it seems appropriate to introduce some of the “movers and shakers” of the early years. Florence Emory was involved in all the major events in nursing between 1920 and 1950. She was the first president of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario from 1927-1930 and president of the Canadian Nurses Association from 1930-1934. She was chair of the prestigious membership committee of the ICN for 20 years from 1933 to 1953. She was the author of the first Canadian textbook on Public Health Nursing (1945) and influenced three generations of Public Health Nursing students at the School of Nursing, University of Toronto. As she herself said, “I was totally absorbed in it. It was a question of being married to it; we put everything else aside”. Her reminiscences are taken from oral interviews conducted by me (the author) during the early 1980’s.

Florence Emory was born in Niagara Falls, Ontario in 1889. Her father was a minister and although he supported Emory’s musical interests, he admired Florence Nightingale and encouraged the young Florence to “take up the work.” Emory graduated from Grace Hospital (later Toronto Western Hospital) and immediately went to work at the Toronto Department of Public Health. She explained that she had always wanted to be a “health nurse” and was very pleased when she was hired by Eunice Dyke, the director of the nursing department. She assisted in the reorganization of that department following the First World

War. She spent a year at Simmons College in Boston studying Public Health Nursing. On her return in 1924 she accepted a position at the new department of Public Health Nursing at the University of Toronto working alongside Kathleen Russell. Although her formal appointment was as instructor of PHN she played the more important role of interpreter of the new program to nurses across the country.

As she said, Miss Russell worked inside the university to get the support of university officials while she worked among the profession to get their support for Miss Russell’s ideas. She saw Miss Russell as a dreamer, not someone who was understood by nurses. She, on the other hand, saw herself as one of the nurses, was more practical, came from the same background and thus was accepted by them.

Emory did not have a university degree, a fact which made her feel “inadequate”. She enjoyed the university finding it enriching, but very hard work. She said that she “would not want other young women to do what I had to do”. For that reason she felt that some nurses should be in the university, those interested in education, in administration and, of course, public health nurses. It is doubtful that Emory saw the time when all nurses would be educated in the university. For herself, she recognized the importance of communication and writing skills and thought that university association would help her achieve her own career aspirations in those directions.

Although the country was going through an economic depression and many nurses were out of work in 1930 when she became president of CNA, there was a great deal happening in nursing. Interestingly, the membership in the Association increased from 6,632 in 1930 to 10,231 in 1934.(1)

One of Emory’s major contributions was steering the Weir report through the CNA in 1932. Her superior communication skills and organizational skills and her sense of humour moved the

negotiations through various stages of the meeting. Although she expressed disappointment that recommendations for independent schools of nursing was not acted upon, she realistically realized that most nurses were not ready for such a move. According to Emory, “spokes of the wheels [for change] converged on that [independent schools], but the idea had to grow gradually”. She herself might have been somewhat ambivalent, especially about how these schools would be financed. She said, “in dealing with the government you have to be as wily as a snake and as gentle as a dove”. Emory’s communication and organizational skills were highly regarded by her colleagues in the profession. Enthusiasm for change was still strong in 1934, at the 25th anniversary of CNA and there was still work to be done related to George Weir’s recommendations. A report about the meeting stated that:

Throughout long sessions which would have tried the patience and good humour of a saint, Miss Emory constantly displayed those qualities of mind and heart which have won for her an abiding place in the respect and affection of sister nurses.(2)

For Emory, one of the greatest achievements of her presidency was the appointment of a fulltime editor of the Canadian Nurse. According to Miss Emory, nursing was growing so quickly that it needed a mouthpiece to speak to the profession and explain nursing to the broader community. She was very pleased with the choice of Ethel Johns as the first editor because “she had a brilliant mind and a way with words”. She herself wrote frequently for the Canadian Nurse as well as the Canadian Journal of Public Health. Her articles convey her conviction about the progress nursing had made and its possibilities for the future. Always she promoted the program at U of T. In her role as associate director of the U of T’s School of Nursing she admitted that life was often hectic, but very stimulating. She believed that her organizational work augmented her teaching. It is hard to know how she found time to write her textbook, the first Canadian public health nursing textbook (1945). But she explained that it all fit together. “We were all busy working for nursing”.

In 1954, she retired from the school and all her nursing responsibilities. She felt that it was time to go, her work was finished and it was up to others to carry on the work her generation had started. She reflected that her time in nursing was a very difficult time, a pioneering time which brought out the strength in a lot of people, “if they were dedicated”. The women she worked with were “strong in intellect, very strong in personality and strong in dedication”. The same can be said of her.

1. Florence Emory, Yesterday and tomorrow. Canadian Nurse, XXX, August 1934, 349-352.
2. Canadian Nurse, August 1934, XXX, 366.

Upcoming Conferences

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF NURSING/ L’ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR L’HISTOIRE DU NURSING

OTTAWA, JUNE 16-19, 2005

The annual meeting of CAHN/ACHN will be held in Ottawa at the Library and Archives of Canada in conjunction with the opening of the Museum of Civilization’s exhibit: **Nursing: The Caring Profession**. *CAHN/ACHN is encouraging groups and individuals to sponsor a student to this historic event.*

The meeting will open on Thursday evening, June 16th with a reception celebrating the opening of the exhibit at the Museum of Civilization. During the conference there will be an opportunity to view the exhibit, visit the Archives, which is the new repository of the Canadian Nurses Association files, as well as attend presentations of papers related to nursing history.

The theme of the conference will be **Nursing History Collections: Technology and Nursing** and, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of our professional journal, second theme **The Canadian**

Nurse and Canadian Nursing. Other topics related to our history will also be presented.

The keynote speaker is Margarete Sandelowski author of **Devices and Desires: Gender, Technology and American Nursing**, University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2000. The topic of her lecture is **Making Matter Mean: The Material World of the Nurse.**

At the banquet on Friday evening Tina Bates, curator of the exhibit, will speak about producing the exhibit and the book of readings on **Canadian Nursing History** compiled by Tina, Dianne Dodd and Nicole Rousseau.

Call for Abstracts

Abstracts related to the conference themes or other relevant topics on nursing history are welcome.

Abstracts should include the title of the paper, purpose, rationale and significance of the research, description of methods, identification of sources, findings and conclusions. The text must not exceed 350 words. The abstract must be typed, single-spaced with a margin of one and one half inches on both sides. Abstracts can be submitted in both English and French.

Submit **four** copies. **One copy** must include the author's name, address, affiliation, phone number and e-mail address. The individual submitting is responsible for confirming that it has been received. Abstracts must be received **before January 21st, 2005** and be submitted by **e-mail** to Judith Young at Judithy@primus.ca

Allemang Centre for History of Nursing Annual Meeting

The annual meeting was held Saturday, October 23, 2004 at the RNAO offices, Kathleen

MacMillan presided. An interesting presentation entitled: "Honouring our past: The beginnings from 1874 to 1922" was given by Lorraine Cramp and Susan Gee. Lorraine teaches at Centennial College and is currently completing her PhD researching the history of nursing education in hospital schools of nursing. Susan is completing her BScN at Ryerson University, and assisted with the collection of oral histories from nursing school graduates in the Toronto area. The presentation was followed by a stimulating discussion among the participants.

President's Report 2003-4

This year we have been able to accomplish initiatives some time in the planning. The award of a \$6100 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation enabled us to hire an archivist to carry out further cataloguing of our archival collection, to purchase archival supplies, and to buy a travelling display case. Our travelling display of Canadian Nurses in World War 11 has already been shown in three locations in Toronto and is currently in Sudbury.

As part of our role in encouraging the writing of nursing history, an essay prize of \$300 is to be awarded this year, the first of an annual award. In addition, the Centre sponsored three students to attend the conference of the Canadian Association for the History of Nursing this June at York University.

Our quarterly newsletter continues to be well received. It is currently edited by Dorothy Wylie. Dorothy was also instrumental in guiding the production of a brochure which we hope will be useful for membership recruitment. Membership is currently steady at 82.

A happy social event this year was a 90th birthday party for Margaret Allemang ably organised by Elizabeth Kovac and sponsored by the Centre.

Special thanks are due to retiring board members Carol Helmstadter and Natalie Riegler who have served since the establishment of the organisation in 1993. Thanks are also due to Elizabeth Kovac

for her work in obtaining the Trillium grant.

Board members 2004-5

Reappointed to the Board were: Margaret Allemang, Gloria Kay, Kathleen MacMillan, Kathryn McPherson, Joyce MacQueen, Dorothy Wylie, and Judy Young. Joining the Board is a new member **Joan Gates**.

Joan Gates is a graduate of Durham College, 1977, and proud lifelong resident of Oshawa. She graduated this October from Ryerson University with her BScN and a certificate in Leadership and Management. Despite a long hiatus in returning to school Joan excelled, strongly supported by her son, Mark and her Mom. She has been on the staff of Whitby Psychiatric Hospital for 25 years. Joan was amazed to find so little nursing history in her educational curriculum. Therefore, chose a risky placement in historical nursing research with Lorraine Cramp at Centennial College, in which she received a pass with distinction. Her work entitled "Graduate/Registered Nurses Association of Ontario: A capsule history" will appear in future issues of the newsletter. Joan has a strong interest in nursing history and its rich background. She truly believes that the careful recording and study of nursing history can bring us together. We welcome Joan to the Board and have no doubt her enthusiasm will contribute to our strength.

Allemang Centre History of Nursing Writing Prize First Award

Lisa Bitonti of Ottawa received the first Allemang Centre history of nursing writing prize of \$300. Her essay is entitled "Factors influencing the development of Radiation Oncology Nursing as seen in the Canadian Nurse: 1924 to 1958".

Lisa is in the Masters degree program at Ottawa University and is completing her thesis on "Self-care for symptom management in telephone-mediated care".

She did her undergraduate degree at Mc Master University, and is currently employed as the Coordinator of Professional Nursing Practice at the Ottawa Hospital Regional Cancer Centre. We wish her all the best in her future career. A shortened version of her paper will appear in the February newsletter.

NEWS ITEMS

TORONTO GENERAL SCHOOL OF NURSING ARCHIVES

The Alumnae Association of the School of Nursing of the Toronto General Hospital have placed their textual records in the City of Toronto Archives at 255 Spadina Road in Toronto. Researchers may now view the material at this address. An appointment is necessary and can be made by calling George Wharton (the archivist) at 416 392-3993.

Membership Renewal 2005

Its that time again, renew for 2005. Share this newsletter with a friend and encourage them to join as well. Increased membership can help provide the funds to engage in more projects and retrieval of nursing history artifacts.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE HISTORY OF NURSING CONFERENCE September 30-October 3 2004

By Carol Helmstadter

The AAHN held its conference this year in Charleston, South Carolina. Approximately 120 persons attended the conference and there was a pre-conference workshop on archives which was also very well attended. The workshop was chaired by Anne-Marie Rafferty who, as always,

had a great many very helpful things to say. She stressed, as the archivists always do, the importance of the creation of memory, and pointed out that the reason for the creation and maintenance of the archive tells us in part what its limitations are going to be. Archives are usually created to authenticate the power of the organization, but they also give the historian authenticity. At the same time she warned us to look for the voids in any archival collection and what those lacks have to tell us. I take this warning very much to heart having been through the nineteenth century archives of the twelve teaching hospitals in London. Although there is a great deal of information about nursing in the records of the House, Finance, Building and Medical Committees from the early nineteenth century on, there are almost no nursing records per se until one reaches the 1890's. This lack tells us how important nineteenth century hospital administrators thought their nursing services were.

There were four other participants in the workshop. Julie Fairman spoke on oral histories and their distinctive methodology, while Susan Benedict and Barbara Brush spoke on their research on nursing under the Nazi regime and their use of the post-modernist approach. Dr. David Cantor from the National Library of Medicine was the fourth speaker. He commented on the impact of archival research on students and the way it can help to establish and support nursing in the wider world. The National Library is building a collection of syllabi of curricula from all over the world.

Joan Lynaugh, the keynote speaker, addressed the issue of "The First Hundred Years of Nursing Education in America," pointing out how nursing education continually changes in response to changes in society. She traced the development of training from the "learn as you work" approach of the nineteenth century when nurse leaders were trying to consolidate their authority, to the development of a professional culture in the universities when the focus on teaching nurses and standardizing curricula switched to nursing itself.

Six posters and 18 papers were then presented, ranging from military nursing, nursing ethics, nursing leadership to the impact of feminism on nursing. There was a heavy heavy emphasis on nursing education. As always, one has to make difficult choices between the various papers in the concurrent sessions, but the level of the papers was consistently high.

Charleston of course is a wonderful tourist city. There was a lovely walking tour around the oldest part of Charleston, tours of ante-bellum homes and some fabulous gardens, and horse carriage rides. As well, the Hunley, the Civil War submarine the first operational submarine and the first to sink a ship, was on display in its preservation tank in the old Navy Yard. It all made for a most enjoyable conference.

OBI TUARIES

VERA ROBERTS

Vera Roberts died of leukemia at the Sault Area Hospital on Friday, October 1, 2004. Beloved sister of the late Beatrice Bessant (late Samuel) and loving aunt of Jacqueline Scott (Michael), Jennifer Massicotte (Ernie), Joan MacKay (Donald) and David Bessant (Gay).

Mikijug, beloved pet will miss her.

Miss Roberts spent many years nursing in the Canadian North (Yukon, North West Territories and Nunavut). She was the proud recipient of the Order of Canada, the Florence Nightingale Medal of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Gold Medal of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada.

A celebration of her life was held Tuesday, October 5th in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

MARGUERITE ROSS

Miss Marguerite Ross passed away Monday, September 27, 2004 in her 96th year. A native of Stayner, to her sisters and brothers on Weir Street she was "Biddie". To her friends she was "Maggie", to many she was a steady influence in times of stress. As one of her friends said: "She was our rock". Marguerite attended Stayner Continuation School and later graduated from the Toronto General Hospital School of Nursing in 1932, with many positions scarce she was hired by University Hospital in Syracuse, New York. During WW 11 she was in the US Army with the nursing unit sent by the hospital and was stationed in England for several years. She was automatically made a US citizen after her service overseas, but in her mind she was always a proud Canadian of County Cork Irish stock. Taking advantage of the GI Bill of Rights she furthered her education graduating from the Syracuse University "Magna Cum Laude". She then became Assistant Professor Orthopaedic Nursing at the University School of Nursing.

After retirement she returned to Collingwood and lived several years in Cranberry Village, then Sunset Village, and later moved to Sunset Manor where she enjoyed excellent loving care. She was predeceased by three sisters and two brothers, and is survived by two nephews. The funeral service was held October 1, 2004 in the Sunset Manor chapel.

History of Nursing Writing Prize

The Allemang Centre is offering a prize of \$500 for the best essay in the history of nursing written by a student in the year September 2004 through August 2005.

Criteria for submissions:

1. The paper may deal with any topic in the history of nursing in any period and in any country.

2. Papers should be a minimum of 8 pages, and a maximum of 25 pages in length including footnotes.
3. Both undergraduate and graduate students may submit.
4. The student must be enrolled in a university or community college in Ontario. Students **from any faculty, including nursing, social science, humanities and science**, are invited to apply.

The deadline for submission is August 31 2005. The prize will be awarded in October 2005. Papers may be submitted either by e-mail or in hard copy. Electronic copies should be in Microsoft Word include academic affiliation, address, telephone and fax numbers. Students submitting in hard copy should send three copies. The first copy should have the name, academic affiliation, address, telephone, fax and e-mail. The remaining two copies should have no identification.

Please send papers to the vice-president of Allemang Centre: Dorothy Wylie
304 - 65 Scadding Avenue
Toronto ON M5A 4L1
e-mail: wyliedm@aol.com

Editor Newsletter

Dorothy Wylie. Please contact her regarding any news items, short articles, announcements, ideas you may have for the Newsletter.
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