

November 2007

NEWSLETTER

For the History of
Nursing

Feature article

The *Canadian Nurse* and the Need for Nurses, 1950-1965

Trish Rossiter

This is a synopsis of the paper that won the Allemang Centre History of Nursing Writing Prize for 2007. Trish is completing her Master's degree at the University of Ottawa.

Recent healthcare research has established the significant impact of nurses within the health care system, as well as on the health of individuals, families, and communities. The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) predicts however, a national shortfall of 113,000 registered nurses by 2016 as retirements exacerbate the current shortage of nurses. A similar period of perceived nursing shortage began during the Second World War and contrary to the belief that was a temporary problem, it extended into the 1950s and 1960s. As medical care shifted from the home to hospitals that grew in size and quantity, and medical technology expanded, the CNA called the lack of nurses a potential "national emergency" in 1950.

As the initial phase of my Masters research, I examined the journal, *Canadian Nurse*, from 1950 to 1965 for the various discourses related to the supply and demand for nurses. Through the lenses of discourse analysis and gender, I explored the following questions: What did the nursing leadership say about the need for nurses during this time? What did the rank-and-file nurses say about the shortage? Which recruitment and/or retention strategies did nursing leaders promote?

Margaret Allemang Centre

Initial examination of the *Canadian Nurse* revealed that members of the nursing and medical professions as well as community leaders, perceived the shortage of nursing staff after the Second World War as a genuine threat, initially to Canadian health care reforms and then to the quality of nursing care in general. Discourses highlighted concerns of CNA leaders regarding the ongoing national shortage, in an attempt to unify nurses to deal with the problem. Regular provincial reports concerning the recruitment and retention efforts directed towards both graduate nurses and student nurses resulted. Findings suggest on the one hand, during the 1950s and 1960s, the nursing profession implicitly and explicitly targeted young women as new recruits for the nursing profession by appealing to their femininity and social roles as caregivers. Men were not encouraged to enter training and the small number who did become nurses, trained outside the country. On the other hand, the strategies employed to either encourage graduate nurses to remain engaged, or return to active practice, focused primarily within Canada. Restrictions on registration reciprocity formed barriers to both inter-provincial and international recruitment efforts. Of note, the *Canadian Nurse* is relatively silent regarding race and its influence on the nursing shortage. These findings will inform and shape questions for my on-going research project, supported by the Associated Medical Services Nursing History Research Unit at the University of Ottawa.

Membership Renewal

It will soon be time to renew your **MEMBERSHIP** for 2008. Please remember to do so. We rely on member fees to continue the work of the Centre and further our goals.
Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting 2006-7 was held on Saturday, October 13, 2007 at the Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, U of T. Kathleen MacMillan presided. Kate McPherson was reappointed to the Board of Directors and a new member, Jaime Lapeyre, joined the Board. Jaime is a nursing professor at Humber College.

Dr Meryn Stuart and Dr Jayne Elliott gave a most interesting presentation on the Associated Medical Services Nursing History Research Unit at the University of Ottawa. The Unit was endowed in 2005 with support from AMS and the University. The mission of the unit is "to support the production and dissemination of new knowledge in Canadian nursing history in the changing health care system". The presentation generated lively discussion about the projects underway and we look forward to a successful future for the unit.

President's Report 2006-7

As outlined in last year's report, a major concern of the organization has been the care and disposition of our archival collection. We were therefore very pleased to announce recently that the University of Toronto Archives have taken the bulk of the textual materials (papers, pamphlets, reports, transcripts, and some photographs). The collection will remain readily available to researchers. We still have a considerable collection of artifacts comprising, in the main, uniforms, medals, photos and memorabilia from World War 1 and 11 nursing sisters. These materials are currently being sorted with a view to finding a suitable home.

The History of Nursing Writing Prize was not awarded in 2006 due to lack of suitable applicants.

Members of the Centre have been involved this past year with local arrangements for the CAHN/ACHN International Nursing History

Conference to be held June 5-7, 2008 at the University of Toronto, Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing. Carol Helmstadter should be commended for her hard work in the on-going planning. An impressive array of speakers from Europe, Australia, United States, and Canada have been invited. The conference is supported by major funding from Associated Medical Services and the CAHN Vera Roberts Endowment and is sponsored by the Allemang Centre, the University of Toronto Nursing Faculty, Ryerson University Nursing Faculty, and York University History Department.

Four issues of the newsletter were mailed to members during the year and a special vote of thanks to Dorothy Wylie for her able work as editor. The newsletter continues to represent the Centre extremely well.

News Items

Kathleen Russell Room

A tea was held at the Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, U of T on Thursday, October 11, 2007 to officially open the Kathleen Russell conference room. Deans Emeritae: Gail Donner, Kay King, Dorothy Pringle, and the estate of the late Phyllis Jones were instrumental in establishing the room.

Kay King studied under Miss Russell and in her greeting remarks reminisced about some of her characteristics. She described her as a scholar with great determination and an ability to go directly to the heart of the matter with the fewest possible words. As a teacher she constantly challenged students which was evident right from her first year course. A favourite assignment was to read a biography and write a one paragraph report. (Miss Russell knew a paragraph when she saw one).

Of equal importance to our academic preparation was our experience of living in residence, which Miss Russell saw as part of the learning experience:

- 1) The Joint School Council. Student members representing the Student Council met regularly with selected staff

members to consider regulations and other matters pertaining to residence life.

- 2) The opportunity of mixing and meeting with the International students and other visitors to the school.
- 3) Social events such as the annual Uniform Dinner where all staff and students wore their school uniforms and were introduced as representatives from their school and countries. The Ski Weekend—for all International and interested senior basic course students. Students and a few staff stayed at a lodge near Huntsville for a weekend.

Among her stories is the one about the burglar incident. As Miss Russell was coming down the hall in Queen's Park she saw a young man come out of an office, questioned him until the police arrived. The police said he was relieved to see them.

Who was Kathleen Russell?

Part one

Lynn Kirkwood

It is fitting that she, the first director of the department (later faculty) was honoured by four former deans of the faculty who, better than anyone else, appreciate her sacrifice in creating the flagship university school of nursing in Canada.

In June 1920, the University of Toronto established a Public Health Nursing program. The fledgling school was administered as a separate department under the sponsorship of the School of Hygiene and financed by the Canadian Red Cross Society. On the advice of Jean Gunn the superintendent of the Toronto General Hospital, Edith Kathleen Russell a graduate of TGH was appointed director. Of the three candidates recommended all of whom had academic degrees, Kathleen Russell had the least nursing experience. In fact, she graduated in 1918 and spent only one year working as a public health nurse before

her appointment.

Although the other two candidates were known to the Canadian nursing leadership, Kathleen Russell was not. One of Ms. Russell's first duties as director was to attend the annual meeting of the Canadian Association of Trained Nurse (later CNA) where she was introduced to the leadership by Jean Gunn. Later that summer Jean Gunn introduced her to the powerful nursing leadership which met every summer at Teacher's College, Columbia University. There was much concern among that leadership that all directors of the new university schools of nursing be nurses and relief when it was discovered that Ms. Russell was indeed a nurse.

The choice of Kathleen Russell as director proved to be inspired. She had the personal background and qualities that both university officials and physicians believed to be those of an educated woman. As her long time associate and friend, Florence Emory, explained: "it was partly Miss Russell's personality that helped get the school started." She was a "quiet sort of reserved person, presented a very fine appearance and was the kind of person a conservative institution would listen to." This particular description of Russell was revealing; so long as she remained suitably 'ladylike' she had her supporters. When she pushed her case her support melted away. According to her biographer, Helen Carpenter, "her dynamic spirit and willpower, her keen mind, and strong sense of purpose were masked by her frail appearance, sensitive nature and lady-like presence".

Ms. Russell was born in Windsor Nova Scotia in 1886 and was always a strong student. She graduated in 1905 with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Kings College, Windsor, Nova Scotia and immediately enrolled in the science degree program at the University of Toronto. After completing the four year program in two years she enrolled in the third year of the medical program along with six other women. However she withdrew in 1907 because of poor health, probably tuberculosis, and returned home to Windsor for the next eight years. At the age of 26 (1915) with a career in medicine no longer

an option she enrolled in the nursing program at the Toronto General Hospital. At the time during the First World War when Miss Russell entered nursing it held the promise for women to make a worthwhile contribution to the national cause and to influence postwar developments in social service. From that point she set the stage for the development of university nursing education in Canada.

This sense of making a contribution to Canadian society informed Kathleen Russell's entire career. From the beginning of her tenure her determination to secure for nursing the same educational opportunities afforded other professional groups entering the university in the 1920s was evident. Originally the Department of Public Health Nursing was funded by the Red Cross Society for only three years and did not have degree status, thus Ms. Russell was not given an academic appointment. She reported directly to the president regarding administrative and financial matters and to the new School of Hygiene and later medicine for sponsorship on Senate and within the university. Approximately 130 students graduated from the program during the first three years and the attrition rate was extremely low. Only three students dropped out or failed during this time. The success of the program gave Ms. Russell cause for optimism.

In 1923 the university agreed to continue the program but refused to grant Ms. Russell academic status or the department senate representation. With little power within the university or government, nurses frequently relied on prominent men within the community to 'take up their cause'. Since the public health movement acted as a catalyst for university nursing education, Miss Russell aligned herself with Dr. J.G.FitzGerald director of the School of Hygiene and Preventive Medicine and the Connaught Laboratories in order to obtain external funding. Ms. Russell fully recognized the need for funding to establish a nursing program which provided high academic and professional standards. According to Florence Emory "she never veered from that goal". At

this time Dr. FitzGerald was negotiating with the Rockefeller Foundation for funding of a new building to meet the needs for postgraduate education and the expansion of undergraduate medical education in public health. In a 1922 memo to Dr. FitzGerald Ms. Russell wrote:

I sometimes wonder if we could possibly ask the Rockefeller people to establish this Department in a new adequate building and then let us show them what we could accomplish in the way of a Public Health Nursing course. Is the suggestion too absurd?

The public health movement of the 1920's offered nurses a unique area of professional expertise independent of hospital (and medical) control. Indeed some early nurses viewed public health nursing as so different from hospital nursing that it constituted its own professional status. Although Ms. Russell did not go that far she did believe that there was a cognitive base in public health nursing not evident in hospital nursing and at that time, and with Dr. Fitzgerald's considerable influence, funding was more likely to be gained through public health than through hospital association.

It was likely through Dr. Gerald FitzGerald that Ms. Russell and the Department of Public Health Nursing came to the attention of the Rockefeller Foundation. Since the School of Hygiene accepted international students funded by the Rockefeller Foundation it was logical to train public health nurses in the same facilities. The department's relationship with the Rockefeller Foundation began in 1923 when Ms. Russell accepted international nursing fellowship students sponsored by the Foundation into the program. During her Rockefeller sponsored tour of European schools of nursing in 1925 she was particularly impressed by the administration of independent schools advocated by Florence Nightingale 80 years earlier. Upon returning to Canada she began to develop her plans to establish a basic nursing program in the university independent of hospital control and to some extent independent of university control. Although she admitted to feelings of impatience, Kathleen Russell was fully aware of the inherent resistance to changing hospital

nursing schools and the university's resistance to accepting nursing as an academic discipline. Nurses training had become socially and culturally entrenched as part of the hospital structure and there was little chance of altering its political and economic foundation.

Ms. Russell developed the tactic of 'deliberate understatement' to diffuse the threat of change. In 1926, despite opposition and with no funding, Ms. Russell established her first 'experimental' four-year diploma program in co-operation with Jean Gunn. In presenting her proposal to the administration she referred to it as a re-arrangement of present courses. This program provided some foundation in the humanities and sciences before students entered hospital training, but there was little opportunity to apply the knowledge of the humanities and sciences to patient care. This was the type of university nursing program generally in place in universities across North America until the 1950s. For Kathleen Russell it was a first step.

Through contact with the Rockefeller Foundation Ms. Russell began sharing her ideas with Mary Beard, an early authority in public health nursing and an associate director in the International Health Division of Rockefeller. These initial talks formed the basis of Kathleen Russell's twenty year quest to gain funding to realize her dream of an exemplary university nursing program. The Rockefeller Foundation was interested in funding experimental public health nursing program and would consider providing financial security for Ms. Russell to experiment with the teaching of public health nursing. But this funding would not come without a price. The Rockefeller Foundation's interest in nursing was secondary to the enhancement of medical education and public health so more university control and closer association with the medical faculty became necessary. The policy of the foundation was clearly outlined in 1925:

Similarly the work of the Foundation in public health nursing was prompted by the needs of its own public health programmes ... never at any time was it

anticipated by the officers that the Foundation could or would do for nursing what it was to do for medical education. Nursing was not considered to be an aim in itself ... Nursing was purely 'ancillary service.'

In light of the university's reluctance to regard nursing as a legitimate course of study Ms. Russell went out of her way to assure university administration that Rockefeller Foundation funding would not bring expectations of degree status for the program. Was Ms. Russell 'once bitten twice shy'? In 1922 an advisory committee had discussed the possibility of "making available a degree course' for leaders in nursing. However it is not clear whether this was Ms. Russell's idea or the idea of members of the advisory council. When the idea was presented to President Falconer he indicated that degree status would not be conferred until nursing could prove that it was worthy of such acclaim. As well, university's and provincial government's willingness to fund nursing projects was dependent upon sanction by the medical community. In all her correspondence with university officials between 1926 and 1940, Ms. Russell seemed to go out of her way to assure officials that funding from the Foundation would not include a request for degree status.

(Part two and bibliography will follow in next issue).

Obituaries

Gloria Violet (Barwell) Kay BSc BN MSCN
Died peacefully in hospital on Thursday, October 25, 2007. Beloved wife of George Kay for 54 years. Dear sister of Ann Barwell, and the late Cora and Arthur Barwell jr. Gloria pursued a vigorous career in nursing both academic and practical. During her hospital duties she noted some 30 years ago that progressively nurses were not wearing a cap--the historical symbol of a nurse. To preserve them, at least as a collection, she set to, and 20 years later donated to the Canadian Museum of Civilization (and enthusiastically accepted) over 170 caps each from an individual school of nursing. Her collection is regarded as the largest

one known. Unfortunately, she died amongst a flurry of capless nurses, but her display still remains and will continue to do so.

A memorial service will be held at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Thornhill on Wednesday, November 7th.

(Excerpted from The Globe and Mail, Friday, November 2, 2007).

Ed. Note: Gloria was a longtime member of the Allemang Centre and served on the Board of Directors for four years. Allemang colleagues, former TEGH classmates, friends and relatives attended a moving service honouring Gloria's memory. Her cap collection began in 1974 and was most comprehensive covering caps from across Canada from 1895 to 1983.

Margaret Mowat MacLachlan died November 17, 2007 at the Cornwall Community Hospital at the age of 93. Margaret was a graduate of the first class of the Bachelor of Nursing of the University of Toronto. She received a Masters Degree in Nursing at the University of Washington, Seattle WA. She was a public health nurse in Lancaster, and also nursed with the VON in Cornwall and the Red Cross in Northern Ontario. She later was a Professor of Nursing at the University of Toronto and the University of New Brunswick. (Excerpted from The Globe and Mail, November 24, 2007).

Elizabeth (Betty) McLeod decided in her own words, "to just get on with it", and died in Mississauga Trillium Hospital October 24, 2007.

She was the widow of Major H.I.T. McLeod and is survived by five children. She graduated from Toronto Western Hospital in 1939 and joined the army for war time service in England. When she settled in Toronto she resumed her career at Queensway General Hospital. (Excerpted from The Globe and Mail, October 26, 2007).

Dates to Remember

Upcoming Conferences

**Canadian Association for the History of Nursing/L'Association Canadienne pour L'Histoire du Nursing
2008 International History of Nursing Conference**

"Borders, Boundaries and Political Context in Nursing and Health Care History"

The annual CAHN/ACHN 2008 conference is an international conference to be held **Thursday June 5 through Saturday June 7, 2008**. It will be hosted by the Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto and held in the Health Sciences Building at 155 College Street. Cosponsors are the Faculty, Women's Studies at York University, the Ryerson School of Nursing and Allemang Centre, and the AMS Nursing History Research Unit.

The conference aims for a critical understanding between health and nursing. It seeks to explore the history of nursing practice, religious and military roots of modern nursing, as well as critical questions on the history of specialty areas and regions of practice. Several panels have been established with distinguished scholars presenting. Topics include: the colonial and political context of nursing; religious and missionary nursing; and the political context of mental health nursing. A fourth session will introduce the Vera Roberts Endowment. Vera was a Canadian nurse who worked in the north. She left a generous legacy through CAHN to promote northern nursing.

A welcome buffet will be held at the Delta Chelsea Hotel, Friday night and a banquet will be held Saturday night at Osgood Hall. CNA will give a short presentation celebrating their 100th anniversary. For registration and hotel information see:

www.cahn-achn.ca

CNA 2008

The Canadian Nurses Association will be celebrating their 100th anniversary June 15-18, 2008 at the Ottawa Congress Centre. The theme is **BE THE CHANGE**.

www.cna-aiic.ca

Request for Information

Susan Reid-Armstrong is researching a book on nurses and the World Health organization (WHO). She would like to contact anyone who knew the late Evelyn Matheson or any of her contemporaries who worked with WHO. Susan can be contacted at 519 821-9428 or e-mail: reids@rogers.com.

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 2007 through June 30, 2008.

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 June 30 2008. The prize will be awarded at the 2008 AGM.

Papers may be submitted either by e-mail or in hard copy. Electronic copies should be in Microsoft Word and 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
Email: wyliedm@aol.com

Editor Newsletter

Dorothy Wylie. Please contact her regarding news items, short articles, announcements, etc. We welcome your contributions.

i."Recommendations of the Conference on Nursing Education, 20 October, 1925,"
Historical Source Material, p. 2077, Rockefeller Foundation Archives.

i.UTA, A83-0041, Faculty of Nursing, "Department of Public Health Nursing Annual
Report, 1922-23.