



Margaret M. Allemang Society for the History of Nursing

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2010 THE YEAR OF THE NURSE

FEATURE ARTICLE

Sister Mary Jones: A Founder of Modern Nursing

(Part 2) by Carol Helmstadter

The author describes the accomplishments of Sister Mary Jones, whose work in creating an improved system of nursing in the 19th Century remains one of the great contributions to modern nursing.

The Professionalization of Nursing

The basic aim at St. John's House, from its inception when the Provisional Council began meeting in 1847, was to professionalize nursing and to offer a legitimate career for both ladies and working class nurses. Sister Mary Jones was particularly concerned with self-regulation; she insisted that St. John's House have exclusive control of its nursing and domestic staffs. When the Sisterhood took over the whole of the nursing at King's College Hospital in 1856, Jones negotiated a contract whereby the Board treated the St. John's House staff as an autonomous community within the hospital. Jones explained this autonomous system of nursing to the Board of Governors at Charing Cross Hospital when the Sisterhood took over the nursing there in 1866. The Lady Superintendent would not report to the Charing Cross Hospital Board of Governors at all. She was responsible to the Council of St. John's House alone for the nursing and the proper use of the hospital supplies, and the nurses and servants had no right of appeal to the Council against her orders and decisions. The medical officers also had no authority over the Sisters and nurses apart from the orders and directions for patient care. The nurses were no longer, as in the past, the servants of the hospital; nursing formed an independent department.

Self-regulation

Jones's insistence on self-regulation extended beyond an autonomous nursing practice to the right of the sisterhood to run its own internal affairs. The chief officer of the Sisterhood was a clergyman who was called the Master. Mrs. Morrice, the previous Lady Superintendent, had come into conflict with this officer, the Rev. C. P. Shepherd, over the locus of authority in the organization and Jones took an even stronger line on this issue. The Rules stated clearly that the Lady Superintendent has control of the Sisterhood "under the authority of the Master," but the Council wants it to be the other way around, Shepherd wrote William Bowman, a Council member, in June 1856. In fact, in this instance the Council was supporting the Lady Superintendent and Bowman was pressing Shepherd to resign. In 1865 the Sisters convinced the Council to have the Rev. H. Girard,

then the Master, relieved of his duties as Secretary and Treasurer. He became the Chaplain rather than the Master, while Jones took the title of Lady Superior. The Sisters did not feel the need for the manly support of a Master which the founding Council members had assumed was essential in 1848.

The Sisters, however, lost the support of their Broad Church Council because of their High Church leanings. They introduced High Church practices into the community and started pressing for aural confession. When the Council expressed disapproval, Jones replied in December 1867,

I am by the voice of the Sisters the Superior of my Sisterhood, and as such I must diligently care for the needs and jealously guard the rights of my Sisters. A constitution of their own is essential, and we must claim the right to regulate our own inner life.

Matters came to a head when the Council refused to appoint a High Church chaplain who was prepared to hear confession. The Sisters informed the Council that they were withdrawing from its governance and would only continue their nursing work if the Council would recognize them as an independent contracting agency. The Council refused this proposal and in January, 1868, Jones and seven Sisters withdrew leaving only two Sisters behind. The seceding Sisters established their own order, the Order of St. Mary, with their own hospital. Jones continued to work in the field as Mother Superior until her death in 1887, but as Florence Nightingale, with her usual acumen, had foreseen, she had far less influence on the new nursing once she left the prestigious London teaching hospitals.

The campaign to professionalize nurses by a professional society, state registration and national written exams was not to emerge until the end of the 1880's, but the Sisters clearly saw their work as

professional in that they knew they had specialized training and knowledge, in their sense of service to the public and in their demand for autonomy or self-regulation. Their construct of nursing demonstrates an integral part of the newly evolving Victorian professional ideal: trained expertise and selection by merit, a selection made not by the open market but by the judgment of similarly educated experts. The new Victorian professionals also competed energetically for income, power and status in society. If Jones and the Sisters clung to the older view of salaried work as unsuitable for ladies, they certainly fought vigorously for power and status for nursing within the hospital, and successfully achieved independence from their male Council.

Sister Mary Jones and Florence Nightingale

In the power struggle with the Council Florence Nightingale supported Jones. "It is quite, quite, quite impossible for the discipline, the internal management, of Sisters and Nurses to be in any other hands but those of one female Head. No man can or ought to interfere with it," she wrote sympathetically in 1867, Nightingale thought Jones had "certainly the greatest of courage I know—either in man or woman." Bowman saw her differently: he told the Bishop of London that "her arrogance passes belief."

Nightingale first met Jones in October, 1854 when she and her father attended an emergency session of the St. John's House Council to recruit nurses for the Crimean expedition. When she returned from the Crimean War, however, Nightingale had lost interest in training nurses and found herself much more attracted to hospital building, army reform, medical statistics and public health, but she did visit King's College Hospital in 1867 and was very impressed with the standard of nursing which Jones had achieved in only one year. In 1859, the Nightingale Fund. The 45,000-pound gift of a grateful nation, lay untouched while Nightingale addressed herself to the matters she considered more important. The Fund trustee became concerned that nothing had been done with the money and suggested a liaison with the training institution at

King's College Hospital rather than setting up a separate Nightingale school. This plan fell through for two reasons. "Miss Jones thinks." Nightingale wrote to Bowman in 1860,

...(and I must say I entirely agree with her that it would be impossible in a Society like St. John's House, or under her, to have nurses who are not members of the Church of England and who are not under her rules.

Consulted Jones Constantly

Jones became, however, one of Nightingale's dearest friends. She spent a good deal of time at Embley, one of the Nightingale homes, and was one of the few people allowed access to Nightingale in the years when she was setting up her own school at St. Thomas's and trying to live in seclusion. In fact, she consulted Jones constantly about the arrangements for her new school. What was the proper age for the probationers? Jones thought that under 24 they were not mature enough and over 40 they were too old to be taught satisfactorily. Should they be required to have a health certificate?

Jones didn't think the health certificate meant a great deal. What about the uniform and furnishings for their rooms? And so on. Nightingale also studied the St. John's House Rules and their contract with King's College closely. Jones accompanied by Bowman, was one of the first visitors to the new school in August 1860.

There was close cooperation between the Nightingale school and the St. John's House Training Institution, with pupils at each often spending a term at the other school. And it was at King's College Hospital that Nightingale set up her midwifery school in 1862. St. John's House had been giving midwifery training to visiting nurses since 1857, and Nightingale even agreed that the midwifery pupils would be temporary members of St. John's House and in all respects under its rules. When Jones decided to secede and set up her own High Church sisterhood, Nightingale told her that the midwifery school would go to whatever hospital

Jones want to; if she went somewhere it could not be accommodated, Nightingale would abolish it, which is what happened in the end.

"Best moral trainer"

Nightingale believed that Jones had the "firmest clearest mind" she knew, and thought it would be the height of earthly ambition to nurse a hospital ward under her supervision. She described Jones as "certainly the best moral trainer of women I know," and said that if she had a younger sister she would gladly send her to Jones' training school. And she also subscribed fully to Jones' position that the Matron or Lady Superintendent must have complete control of the female staff in the hospital. Clearly, Nightingale drew the larger part of her idea for the new school at St. Thomas's from Jones and St. John's House. Apart from the fact that the school at St. Thomas's was not a religious community, the only other major deviation from the St. John's model as Nightingale first projected it was her insistence that the school not be structured by social class. She was to yield on this point later.

If in theory the new Nightingale school was closet modeled on the Sisters' Training Institution, in practice, matters were very different. Nightingale was not living and working with the nurses in the hospital as the Sisters of St. John's House did and as a result found herself unable to enforce their principles at St. Thomas's. In any case, she had settled on the contract with St. Thomas's as the easiest solution to the problem of putting the money in the Nightingale Fund to work, and in the early years of the school, she put little effort into it.

The Nightingale Fund did pay for a better standard of accommodation, and Nightingale insisted that Mrs. Wardroper be called Lady Superintendent rather than Matron. Nightingale also asked that the probationers do no scrubbing or scouring in the wards, but she was not as enthusiastic as the Sisters of St. John's House about treating them as professionals. "A common day room," (such as the Sisters of St. John's House insisted on,) she wrote in 1860,

...is undesirable. It encourages dawdling and gossiping. Her (the nurse's) time ought to be fully taken up with ward work, her necessary sleep and exercise, and what making and mending she has to do for herself.

Nightingale was more interested in finding respectable working class nurses who knew how to work hard than in developing a more professional nurse.

The doctors who taught the St. John's House nurses were professors of medicine and surgery; at St. Thomas's it was Mr. Whitfield, the apothecary, who often failed to give the lectures and eventually had to be forced to resign because he had a serious drinking problem. The St. John's House system was based on a group of more educated women who were trained as nurses and who then taught the probationers. The Nightingale Fund, on the other hand, agreed that only the old matron, Mrs. Wardroper, who was neither a lady or a nurse, and the old sisters at St. Thomas's would train the probationers. These officers all reported to St. Thomas's Treasurer, not to the Nightingale Fund which was paying them. The St. John's House probationers worked together with their instructors, the Sisters, on the wards but at St. Thomas's, the doctors and Mrs. Wardroper refused to let Miss Torrance, the new training sister, teach on the wards. They insisted that she do all her training and supervising in the nurses' home. The net effect was

that the Nightingale School was not a major break with the past in the sense that St. John's House was.

Conclusion

Feminist historians have often assumed that nineteenth century nursing leaders accepted the patriarchal organization of their own work as well as of society. The work of Sister Mary Jones is a prime example of how mistaken this view is. Not only did she and her Sisters challenge the organizational framework within which nurses worked in the hospital, but they were among the first to successfully establish a self-governing community of women in Victorian England. Jones and the Sisterhood deserve far more recognition, not only as leaders in nursing, but leaders in the nineteenth century struggle for the right of women to use their abilities and talents in broader and more open arenas.

The autonomous professional nursing service which Jones envisioned and briefly established did not survive the nineteenth century. Her work in creating an improved system of nursing, however, remains one of the great contributions to modern nursing. Her vision of nursing as a truly independent profession is a paradigm which modern nurses still seek to make a reality.

[Source: Sister Mary Jones: a founder of modern nursing, Registered Nurse, December-January 1994/95. Reprinted with permission from RNAO].

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Remember to renew your membership. Your support is needed to carry out our mandate of information sharing to promote and preserve nursing history.

**Canadian Association for the History of Nursing 2010 Annual Meeting, Winnipeg, June 18-20:
“Continuities, Contingencies and Fault Lines: Nursing 100 Years After Nightingale”**

By Judy Young

Marion Mackay and her committee are to be congratulated on organizing an excellent 2010 conference, the second to be held in the Helen Glass Nursing Building on the campus of the University of Manitoba. Events got off to a great start with the AMS/Hannah lecture given, this year, by Sioban Nelson, Dean and Professor of Nursing, Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto. Her talk “The Nightingale Imperative: Icons, Imaginations and Nursing Identity” provided a fresh look at Nightingale’s enduring influence particularly outside the United Kingdom. The Nightingale image as nursing reformer remains, said Sioban, particularly significant in present day countries where women have low status and thus problems in developing nursing as an independent profession. One of the most enduring symbols, the Nightingale Pledge (written by an American in 1893), has helped to keep her image alive.

During the next two days, the forty conference participants were treated to a range of excellent papers. Among the presenters, Allemang Society members, Jayne Elliott, Carol Helmstadter, Joyce MacQueen, Jaime Lapeyre and Cynthia Toman all gave papers or contributed to presentations. In the program as a whole, it was particularly encouraging to see Masters and PhD students so well represented and to note the uniformly high quality of their papers. The program committee is to be congratulated on their excellent programming, while the organization of sessions allowed for good audience participation, always the mark of a successful conference.

NEWS ITEMS

Allemang Society Annual General Meeting

DATE: Saturday October 16, 2010

Annual General Meeting at 2 pm, speaker at 3pm.

PLACE: University Women’s Club 162 St. George Street, Toronto (corner of St. George and Huron next to the Bata Shoe Museum). The St. George subway is close by. There is limited parking at the rear of the building.

PRESENTATION: *POLIO AND RELIGION IN 1950s CANADA*

Ginny Bodsworth is a historian, teacher, and artist. She recently obtained her Master’s degree in History from York University (working with Kathryn McPherson). The focus of her Master’s degree, and the talk she will give, is the effect of religion on people’s attitudes and responses to polio in 1950s Toronto.

NON-MEMBERS WELCOME

REFRESHMENTS

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE FROM OUR USUAL LOCATION

Canadian Nurses Association Biennial Convention, Halifax, Nova Scotia, June 7-9, 2010

The **Jean Mance Award** was presented to **Gail Donner** at the CNA annual meeting. Gail is a Dean Emeritus of the Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto. Karen Neufeld, CNA President said, “Gail is articulate, engaged and influential—and her leadership has had a marked positive impact on health-care delivery systems in Ontario and across Canada. She is an inspiration to all”.

Gail is also a partner in donnerwheeler, Career Planning Consultants. During her outstanding career she has made many contributions to nursing through academic research, nursing administration and health policy. Previously, she has won the Award of Excellence in Teacher Award from Sigma Theta Tau International, the YWCA Women of Distinction Award, RNAO Merit Award and Life Membership, and is a recipient of the Order of Canada.

Members of the Order of Canada

Mary Jo Haddad, President and CEO of The Hospital for Sick Children was appointed a member of the Order of Canada on June 30th. The Order is the country’s highest civilian honour for lifetime achievement. The Windsor native is being honoured for her contributions to the promotion and advancement of Children’s health care as a neonatal nurse, and her current role as CEO of the paediatrics teaching hospital. (Windsor Star, July 2, 2010).

Mary Ellen Jeans received the Order for her contribution to advancements in the treatment of chronic pain and as a nursing leader in Canada. She is a retired professor at Mc Gill University and a former executive director of The Canadian Nurses Association.

Sister Simone Roach received the Order for her contribution as a leader in nursing and for establishing the first Code of Ethics for nurses in Canada. She is a retired associate professor and former nursing chair of nursing at St. Francis Xavier University.

Ryerson University

Paula Goering received an Honorary PhD from Ryerson University in June 2010.

She is a nurse with a PhD in Medical Science and a professor in the department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto. Paula is also director of the health system research and consulting unit at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. She holds a Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR)/Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) Health Services Chair called Generating and Disseminating best Practices in Mental Health and Addiction.

Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto

Professor Sioban Nelson, Dean of the Faculty of Nursing has been reappointed for another seven-year term. She earned her PhD from Griffith University, Australia writing her dissertation on the relationship between the care of the sick, subjectivity and ethical practice. Nelson joined the U of T in 2006 after serving as head of the School of Nursing at the University of Melbourne. She is a leading nursing scholar and author of two books and four edited collections. Her seventh book `Notes on Nightingale, The Influence and Legacy of a Nursing Icon , a collection of essays on Florence Nightingale in honour of the centenary of her death, co-authored with Professor Anne Marie Rafferty, Dean of the Florence Nightingale School of Nursing and Midwifery, Kings College, London, is due the end of August 2010. Nelson is also Editor-in-Chief of Nursing Inquiry (Wiley-Blackwells), and co-editor of the Culture and Politics of Healthcare Work (Cornell University Press).

Michael McGillion, Professor at the Faculty of Nursing was awarded the Arch Award for young alumni from McMaster University for remarkable individuals that have made unique and interesting contributions to society. He earned a BScN from McMaster in 1996, and a PhD from the University of Toronto in 2006. He is an assistant professor at U of T and his research is focused on the quality of life of people with debilitating cardiac pain caused by refractory angina. He also leads a national team of scientists, clinicians, and patient representatives in the development of joint Canadian Cardiovascular Society—Canadian Pain Society Guidelines for the management of refractory angina.

Upcoming conferences

International Perspectives on Nursing History

September 14-16, 2010, London, England

European Nursing History Group and the American Association for the History of Nursing, Inc.

To be held in the International Year of the Nurse, and timed to run alongside commemorative events to mark the centenary of the death of Florence Nightingale, the conference aims to showcase innovative and scholarly work by nurse-historians and academics from allied disciplines. The conference will appeal to historians of nursing and medicine, women's historians, critical theorists and intellectual historians.

See <http://www.aahn.org/conference.html> or <http://www.nursesvoices.org.uk/conference/> for more information.

HISTORY OF NURSING WRITING PRIZE

The Allemang Society is offering a nationwide prize of \$500 for the best essay in the history of nursing written by a student in the year September 2010 through June 2011.

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 anywhere in Canada. Students **from any faculty, including nursing, social science, humanities and science**, are invited to apply.

The deadline for submission is **JUNE 30, 2011**, the prize will be awarded at the 2011 Annual General Meeting.

Papers may be submitted either by email 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 email. The accompanying two copies should have no identification.

Please send papers to:

Lynn Kirkwood

570 McCann Road, Portland, ON K0S 1V0

Email: Kirkwood@rideau.net

Book Review

Donna Yates-Adelman, *Yes, Sister: Memoir of a Young Nurse* (Shoreline, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, QC, 2005).

In this highly personal, readable account of the author's nursing training (1959-62), the reference in the title is to the Grey Nuns of the Holy Cross Hospital, Calgary who exerted considerable influence over the author and her classmates during their three years at the hospital. In lively prose, Yates-Adelman details, her experiences as she moved through the wards of the hospital and through rotations at affiliating institutions. It would be interesting to know if she kept a diary of her student days as, in the book, she provides vivid accounts of events, experiences with patients and staff, and the coming and goings of classmates. The book will be of particular interest to anyone who trained, at this time, in a Catholic hospital. It is also a great resource for anyone researching hospital training schools in Canada.

Donna is a member of the Allemang Society and has donated a copy of her book to us. Anyone wishing to borrow the book please contact Judy Young.

OBITUARIES

This section is to recognize the contributions of past nurses and others to the health profession and to society as a whole. Their accomplishments are noteworthy.

Powell, Lois Mary McKelvie passed away on Friday May 7, 2010. She was born in Hamilton on May 13, 1931. Following graduation with a BScN degree she joined the VON, Hamilton branch for 5 years. She joined the staff at the Hamilton General Hospital and went on to get a Master's degree in Nursing from the University of Washington, Seattle. Lois proceeded through the ranks and became the Associate Director of Nursing until she took early retirement in 1984. Among her community commitments were the Executive committee of the RNAO, more than 25 years on the Board of Visiting Homemakers, and Board member of the Hamilton General Volunteer Association. Lois travelled extensively during her life and was an active golfer and gardener when her health permitted. She enjoyed her many duplicate bridge clubs.

A faithful member of Central Presbyterian Church, she was ordained an Elder in 1985 and an Elder Emeritus in 2005. To the end she deeply valued her friends and family.

(Excerpted from The Globe and Mail, May 8, 2010)

Editor Newsletter

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

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