

The History of Professional Nursing in North Carolina, 1902–2002

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CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
Durham, North Carolina

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Pollitt, Phoebe.

The History of Professional Nursing in North Carolina, 1902-2002 / Phoebe
A. Pollitt.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-61163-163-0 (alk. paper)

1. Nursing services--Administration--North Carolina--History. I. Title.

RT89.P647 2013

362.17'309756--dc23

2013029720

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
700 Kent Street
Durham, North Carolina 27701
Telephone (919) 489-7486
Fax (919) 493-5668
www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America

For my parents, Dan and Jean Pollitt, my sons, Doug and Andrew Paletta, and friends and family who have shared life's joys and journeys, you know who you are. And all the wonderful nurses in North Carolina and beyond who have fearlessly led the way and given today's nurses courage and hope.

“Live your life while you have it. Life is a splendid gift. There is nothing small about it.”

Florence Nightingale

“When one goes nursing, all things must be expected.”

Mary von Olnhausen,
Union Army Nurse in New Bern,
North Carolina, 1864

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Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to the many people who helped me write this book; to all those colleagues and family members who provided support, and offered valuable insights about the work; and to the always helpful and good humored-librarians and archivists at the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina; the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; the Duke University Medical Center Archives, Durham, North Carolina; Victor at the Public Library in New Bern, North Carolina; Zoe at the North Carolina Collection at the Pack Library in Asheville, North Carolina; John, James, Paul, Marilia, Andie and Dean at the Belk Library at Appalachian State University. Through the years, several teachers believed in me and taught me to be a scholar. They include Mrs. Clara Walters, Dr. David Mielke, Dr. Patricia Miller, Dr. William Moss, Dr. Franz Mingert, Dr. William Link and Dr. Carol Winters. The North Carolina Nursing Centennial Committee members planted the seeds that became this book and include Polly Johnson, Audrey Booth, Sindy Barker, Frankie Miller, Gene Tranbarger, and John Wilson. All of these people have inspired, taught, and supported me and my love for North Carolina nursing history; any errors in the book are mine alone. Finally, I want to acknowledge and thank my editor Grace Pledger and indexer Noeline Bridge for their constant support and encouragement. The book is better because of their influence and advice.

Editorial Note

A word about proper names:

Many agencies, institutions and people in this book have had multiple names. For instance, the current North Carolina Board of Nursing has had four names since 1903. From 1903–1915 it was titled the Board of Examiners of Trained Nurses of North Carolina or in some documents of the time the State Board of Examiners of Nursing. In 1915 the name changed to the North Carolina Board of Nurse Examiners. In 1953 the name was changed again to the North Carolina Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education and in 1965 it became the North Carolina Board of Nursing and has remained so until today. Similarly, what is today the Mission Health System in Asheville, North Carolina has been referred to by numerous names over the years. These include the Flower Mission Hospital, Mission Hospital, Mission Memorial Hospital, Memorial Mission Hospital, Mission/St. Joseph's Hospital and Mission St. Joseph's Health System. One example of a nurse who has had more than one name is public health nurse Mary King Bailey Kneebler. She graduated from Duke Hospital School of Nursing as Mary King. She married Mr. Bailey while she was a public health nurse in Caldwell County, and was known as Mary Bailey. Sadly, he died in World War II. She remarried a few years later and was known as Mary King Kneebler when she was helping to start the nursing program at Western Carolina University. In order to reduce confusion, the text will reflect the most current proper names for people, agencies and institutions.

List of Abbreviations

- AAMN–American Assembly of Men in Nursing
AJN–American Journal of Nursing
ANA–American Nurses Association
BSN–Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree
CDC–Cadet Nurse Corps
CNM–Certificate Nurse Midwife
ECU–East Carolina University
FNP–Family Nurse Practitioner
HD–Health Department
LPN–Licensed Practical Nurse
MSN–Master of Sciences in Nursing Degree
NACGN–National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses
NCA&T–North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University
NCACGN–North Carolina Association of Colored Graduate Nurses
NCANRNI–North Carolina Association of Negro Registered Nurses, Inc.
NCANS–North Carolina Association of Nursing Students
NCBON–North Carolina Board of Nursing
NCCU–North Carolina Central University
NCLN(E)–North Carolina League of Nursing (once called the North Carolina League of Nursing Education)
NCNA (NCSNA)–North Carolina Nurses Association; North Carolina State Nurses Association
NCNPA–North Carolina Nurse Practice
NCSOPH–University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health
NLRB–National Labor Relations Board

NP–Nurse Practitioner

PHN–Public Health Nurse

RN–Registered Nurse

SON–School of Nursing

TB–Tuberculosis

UNC-CH–University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

UNC-G–University of North Carolina at Greensboro

USPHS–United States Public Health Service

WCU–Western Carolina University

WSSU–Winston Salem State University

Brief North Carolina Nursing Timeline 1861–2002

- 1861–1865:** At the beginning of the Civil War, North Carolina has neither hospitals nor trained nurses. Hundreds of women in the state organize “Way-side Hospitals” and work for Confederate and Union hospitals as nurses.
- 1876:** Jane Wilkes, a Civil War nurse from Charlotte, North Carolina, is instrumental in establishing St. Peter’s Hospital in Charlotte, the first civilian hospital in the state. In 1898 the hospital adds a training school for nurses. By law and custom this is a “whites only” establishment.
- 1891:** Jane Wilkes leads a group of African American and White Charlotte area residents to open the Good Samaritan Hospital for African Americans. In 1902 a nursing school is established at this hospital.
- 1894:** The state’s first nursing school opens at Rex Hospital in Raleigh. Watts Hospital School of Nursing opens in Durham in 1895 and is the oldest school of nursing still in operation in the state.
- 1896:** North Carolina’s first nursing school for African Americans opens at St. Agnes Hospital on the campus of St. Augustine College in Raleigh, North Carolina.
- 1902:** Mary Lewis Wyche leads a group of nurses to form the North Carolina State Nurses Association.
- 1903:** On March 3, 1903, North Carolina becomes the first state in the nation to pass a nurse registration law.
- 1915:** A North Carolina Board of Health survey of school children reveals shocking rates of tuberculosis, malaria, malnutrition, impaired vision and hearing, diseased throats and poor teeth. This survey influences the state legislature to hire the first six statewide school nurses.
- 1917:** Through a revision in the North Carolina Nurse Practice Act, a “training school inspectress” appointed by the North Carolina State Nurses As-

sociation is employed to survey and report on the conditions of nursing schools in the state.

1923: Because African American nurses are excluded from the North Carolina State Nurses Association, Carrie Early Broadfoot, RN organizes a North Carolina chapter of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses.

1933: The federal government's response to the human suffering experienced during the Great Depression, called the New Deal, included funding public-health nursing programs. In North Carolina, the number of public health nurses increased from 65 in 1933 to 297 in 1940.

1937: North Carolina becomes the first state to offer publicly funded family planning services to its citizens. Public Health Nurses are in the forefront of education and dispensing family planning devices.

1945: Over 1,000 nurses from North Carolina serve in the Armed Forces during World War II.

1947: The North Carolina Nurse Practice Act is amended to include regulations for licensed practical nurses (LPNs) to work under the supervision of physicians or registered nurses to provide hands-on care for patients.

1949: The North Carolina Negro Nurses, INC and the North Carolina State Nurse Association merge into one organization to be the voice for nursing in North Carolina.

1950: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing establishes the first Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program in the state. Only white students are allowed to enroll. In 1953, the state legislature funds BSN programs at two historically African American state universities: North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro and Winston Salem State University in Winston Salem, North Carolina.

1957: Thelma Ingles, RN and Dr. Eugene Stead introduce the first clinical master's program in nursing in the country at Duke University's School of Nursing.

1957: The first Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) program in North Carolina opens at Women's College (now known as the University of North Carolina at Greensboro).

1961: North Carolina Central University's School of Nursing establishes one of the first RN to BSN programs in the country. This allows students who

hold diplomas from hospital-based nursing education programs to earn a BSN in one year.

1963: Associate Degree in Nursing programs spread quickly across the state through the expanding community college system.

1965: Registered nurses in North Carolina win a major victory when licensure becomes mandatory to practice nursing in North Carolina.

1970: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing establishes one of the first Nurse Practitioner programs in the country.

1975: North Carolina passes landmark legislation by licensing nurses to perform medical acts and prescribe medications. By 1976, there are 90 nurse practitioners in North Carolina.

1981: North Carolina becomes the first state in the nation in which nurses elect nurse members of the state Board of Nursing rather than have them appointed by the Governor.

1983: Certified Nurse Midwives receive legal authorization to practice in North Carolina.

1989: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing establishes the first Ph.D. program in Nursing in the state. East Carolina University establishes one in 2002.

2002: Nurses and nursing organizations across North Carolina celebrate the centennial of Registered Nursing in the state and nation with educational programs, articles in the press, a calendar, and a film.