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# The History of Nursing in Arkansas

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THE HISTORY OF NURSING IN ARKANSAS

A Term Paper

Presented to

Mr. Kenneth Sandifer

Ouachita Baptist University

In Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the course

Special Studies

*Honors Paper # 26*

by

Martha Annette Johnson

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## PREFACE

This paper tells very briefly the history of nursing in Arkansas. Because a thorough investigation of the history of nursing would require a longer period of time, I have chosen the most striking events pertaining to the subject.

The information in this paper was taken from unpublished manuscripts, mostly minutes from meetings of various organizations, in the possession of Miss Linnie Beauchamp, R.N., who is currently compiling the information for a book. I am greatly indebted to her for the time and help she has given to me.

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF ARKANSAS

During a ten month exploration of what is now Arkansas, DeSoto journeyed from the Mississippi River as far as the Ozarks and the present site of Hot Springs. This was in 1541 and late 1542. Jacque Marquette and Louis Joliet, French explorers, traveled down the Mississippi as far as the mouth of the Arkansas in 1673. After Spain ceded Louisiana to France in 1682, Sieur de la Salle, another Frenchman, explored the entire valley of the Mississippi. La Salle having been murdered during a second expedition to the region, his lieutenant, Henry de Tonti, built a camp near the mouth of the Arkansas River in 1686. This became Arkansas Post which was one of the first white settlements on the Lower Mississippi. In 1717 the French Government gave a charter to the Western Company, a company formed by John Law to colonize Louisiana as a means of solving the financial problems of the French Government. Known as the Mississippi Scheme, this brought many colonists to Arkansas.

After France ceded Louisiana to Spain in 1762, the Spaniards took over Arkansas Post in 1769 and renamed it Fort Charles III. By a secret treaty between Napoleon and the king of Spain in 1800, the region again became French.

Although there were several fur-trading posts along the White and Arkansas rivers during the periods of French and Spanish control, settlers did not begin to flock into the

region until after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and the establishment of United States troops at Arkansas Post in 1804.

Since most of the land west of Mississippi still remained unsettled, President Jefferson suggested that these lands be given to the Cherokee Indians who were being moved from their lands in the Tennessee and Carolina mountains. In 1808 the Osage agreed to move westward and give up their lands to the Cherokee. During the transfer of lands, clashes between the two tribes made it necessary for the Government to establish Fort Smith in 1817. In 1825 and 1828 the western boundary of Arkansas was set by treaties with the Choctaw and Cherokee Indians.

After the Louisiana Purchase, Arkansas remained part of the Louisiana Territory. In 1806 part of the New Madrid District was set off as the District of Arkansas by the legislature of the Louisiana Territory. In 1813 Arkansas became part of the Missouri Territory. In 1819 the separate Arkansas Territory was organized.

As settlements sprang up along the main routes from Arkansas Post to Fort Smith more and more pioneers flocked into the territory. In 1820, the capital was moved to Little Rock. By this time there were also five organized counties. In 1836 Arkansas became the twenty-fifth state in the Union.

## EARLY HISTORY OF NURSING

Nursing has been practiced for thousands of years. In the early history of Arkansas, the people cared for their sick but in a far different manner from the way in which they are cared for today.

In the Civil War days in Arkansas, Catholic Sisters and the Mercy Sisters turned their schools into hospitals. They had no professionally trained people to care for the sick; instead, lay women cared for the sick and needy strictly on a volunteer basis. The larger hospitals of this time included ones at Helena, Little Rock, Fort Smith, St. John's, Christ Church, and St. Mary's.

During Reconstruction Days, Provident Associations organized in a few towns such as Pine Bluff, Little Rock, and Fort Smith to give aid and care to the sick and needy. Special work was done in Little Rock which led to aid for Marines and to the development of a County Hospital. The work of a group with the help of the Episcopal Clergy and lay women in Fort Smith led to the Old St. John's Hospital. This later became known as Sparks Hospital. It was here that the first three nurses who received their training in Arkansas were trained.

There was only one Arkansas nurse to volunteer for service in the Spanish American War. She was instrumental in forming the Spanish American War Auxiliary and the Child Relief of Spanish American War Veterans.

## PUBLIC HEALTH

Early public health problems such as malaria, typhoid, cholera, pellegra, and trachoma epidemics created a desperate need for the public health nurse. In 1916 the Graduate Nurses Association of Arkansas appointed a committee to investigate the feasibility of organizing an Arkansas Public Health Nurses Association.

Mrs. Mary Breckenridge Thompson, R.N., a graduate of a school of nursing in New York and a resident of Eureka Springs, Arkansas did pioneer work in efforts to start child welfare programs through the Arkansas Federation of Women's Clubs. She covered the state making speeches to different clubs trying to bring to light the importance and great need for child welfare programs. A national magazine, Delineator, printed an article entitled "Save the Seventh Baby" and carried reference to the fact that every seventh baby in the United States was dying at birth or soon after. It made surveys in four towns in Arkansas and continued the effort to relay the idea of County nurses.

The organization of the Arkansas State Board of Health was due to work of Dr. Morgan Smith, Dean of Arkansas Medical School, and the Rockefeller Hookworm Committee which did investigations revealing the fact that hookworms were found in children who went barefoot.



Contributions to Public Health and to a new plan for County Public Health Nurses were given by voluntary organizations such as the Arkansas Tuberculosis Association and the American Red Cross. Earle Chambers, executive secretary of the Arkansas T.B. Association, tried to promote health examinations especially for T.B. and for children. In 1916 Jackson County became the first county to offer money to pay the transportation for a county nurse. In July, 1919 a State Supervisor of Public Health Nursing was appointed. Miss Linnie Beauchamp, R.N., State Supervisor of Public Health Nursing and of Red Cross Nurses, called the Public Health Nurses to assemble September 9-13, 1920. This was the beginning of the first institute of public health nurses. The organization of the Arkansas Public Health Nursing Association, which was affiliated with the National Association, was in 1921.

With the Shepard-Towner Bill for maternal and child Health, Arkansas got its first \$5000 and a Medical Director, Dr. Frances Sage Bradley, from the United States Children's Bureau. This organized traveling conferences for parents which covered eighteen counties.

After this was accomplished, birth and death registration work was intensified. Because of lack of cooperation on part of the doctors, this task was very difficult. Since most babies were delivered by midwives, midwife inspection and classes were started. Here the midwives, were taught how to care for the mother and the child during childbirth. They were supplied with simple "kits" and taught simple methods of sterilization.

The Arklight, the official publication for nurses, began with the Arkansas State Board of Health and Bureau of Child Hygiene and Public Health Nursing. It began about 1922 or 1923. In 1944 the Arkansas State Nurses Association decided to continue publication of the Arklight. In 1952 the Board of Directors decided to dispense with a printed Arklight during the year to experiment with a mimeographed newsletter to be mailed out every other month. Publication was not cut from twelve to six issues per year until 1959.

## ARKANSAS STATE NURSES ASSOCIATION

On October 30, 1912, twenty-five graduate nurses living in Arkansas met at the Little Rock YWCA to organize the first Graduate Nurses Association of Arkansas. Its immediate objective was to bring about the state registration of nurses.

In this first meeting the organization appointed a committee to draw up a bill which would create a State Board of Nurse Examiners. The purpose of such an organization was for the registration and licensure of nurses in Arkansas.

On October 29, 1913, the Association met for the second time. Although the Association was only one year old, it had already succeeded in getting the Nurse Practice Act passed by the 1913 Legislature. During this meeting, organization of an Association of Hospital Superintendents came up for discussion. This later became known as the Arkansas League for Nursing Education. A current annual event of this League is the Professional Nurse Short-Term Traineeship Program. The purpose of this is to assist nurses in updating management and teaching skills which are needed to improve patient care in hospitals and other institutions where they are employed.

In action during the 1914 meeting, members voted to apply to the National Graduate Nurses Association for membership of the Arkansas Graduate Nurses Association.

The purpose of the special meeting held in 1917 was to

admit all waiting and eligible applicants to the Arkansas State Graduate Nurses Association in order that the Red Cross could enroll more members from Arkansas. An application by the American Journal of Nursing to become the official organ of the Arkansas State Graduate Nurses Association was also approved by members attending this meeting.

The five officers and twenty members present at the 1919 meeting voted to change the name from Arkansas Graduate Nurses Association to Arkansas State Nurses Association.

During the 1920 meeting of what was now the Arkansas State Nurses Association, members took action on a very controversial piece of business. Having received a letter from the Chairman of ANA's Committee on Revision of Constitution and Bylaws suggesting that "Caucasian Race" be stricken from ANA's Bylaws, members present felt it necessary for those words to remain for the southern states. Upon request of the Southwestern Division of the American Red Cross, the ASNA approved aid in having a nursing survey made of the schools in the state. Since cost of the survey was a problem, each nurse in Arkansas was taxed \$3 to help defray expenses in 1922. In addition, each hospital was asked to contribute \$10. The survey was completed by Miss Elizabeth Shellabarger in 1923. Miss Shellabarger made reports of her work at the 1928 and 1930 conventions of ASNA.

The Legislative Committee, which was trying to get a new Nurse Practice Act bill passed at the 1921 session of the Arkansas General Assembly, announced at the meeting of ASNA

in 1921 that the proposed new nursing legislation had been approved by the newly-organized Arkansas State Hospital Association but opposed by nurses. After the bill was introduced in the Legislature, it was read twice and referred to the Committee on Public Health. Three days later, when the Committee acted on the bill, twenty-two nurses spoke against the bill and the committee voted unanimously against it. It also failed to pass in 1927.

Up until 1926 the term "Training School for Nurses" was used instead of "School of Nursing." When members of the 1926 meeting of ASNA voted to use the term "School of Nursing," they also voted to use the term "Registered Nurse" instead of "Graduate Nurse."

In 1933 ASNA's Board of Directors took the economic problems of the private duty nurse to heart. They attempted to solve the problem by urging hospital authorities to employ some of the "surplus" in general floor duty "to see whether or not graduate nurse service will prove more satisfactory for your institution than students or attendants." Since there were not enough calls for private duty nursing services to provide a living for all in this field of work, the Board asked each district to vote on a proposal to reduce private duty nursing fees. The majority, however, voted against the measure. Mrs. Euphra Hixon Tate, R.N. from St. Mary's Hospital in Russellville was selected to direct a program for unemployed nurses under the C.W.A. The Red Cross returned Miss Linnie Beauchamp to Arkansas to help in holding Institutes in Methods

of Teaching Home Nursing Courses for unemployed nurses. Many nurses taught Home Economics classes in High Schools, served in Nursery and Kindergarten Schools, and taught adult groups. Hospitals were employing nurses for just their meals or \$1 per day.

At a 1937 call meeting of the Board of Directors, proposed legislation which provided for nurses training schools in Arkansas hospitals was read and discussed. According to this act, all public or private hospitals in Arkansas having a daily average of only twenty-five patients throughout the year could establish a training school for nurses. After the Board sent messages to nurses throughout the state urging them to call on nurses, doctors, and lay people to rally in opposition to the proposed legislation, they appointed a committee to meet with the Arkansas Senate's Public Health Committee to explain the danger of the proposed legislation.

On the same day of the called Board meeting, this bill was passed in the Senate. Later, it was recalled for hearing by the Senate Public Health Committee. Legislators received thousands of letters from nurses and their freinds urging them to vote against the measure because it would lower the standard of nursing. On March 4, 1937, the proposed legislation was defeated in the Senate and was, therefore, not introduced in the House.

At a pre-convention meeting on October 20, 1940, the Board recommended the appointment of a Legislative Advisory Council which was to be composed of members of the League of Nursing Education. They did this believing that ASNA

could best help in the national defense program by raising its nursing standards. In order to do this, all schools of nursing in Arkansas were to meet at least minimum requirements of the American Red Cross Nursing Service.

The Board also voted that the Legislative Committee be authorized to cooperate with the Arkansas State Board of Nurse Examiners in drawing up a new Nurse Practice Act to be presented at the next session of the State Legislature.

During the 1942 meeting, creation of the Arkansas Nurses Defense Council was approved, with instructions that it carry out immediate plans for emergency nursing cooperation with the National Nursing Defense Council and the Office of Civil Defense. This brought about the Cadet Nursing Corps.

At a call meeting June 23, 1943, special attention of the Executive Board was held to a "walk out" by personnel at University clinic. After voting that the press be notified that only two of the participants were members of ASNA, the Board appointed a Personnel Practices and Policies Committee to act as a mediator for nurses throughout the state.

At the annual meeting in 1946, the Legislative Committee recommended the following changes in the Nurse Practice Act:

- (1) that registration for practical nurses be mandatory,
- (2) that "practical nurse" be the proper nomenclature, and
- (3) that a Board of Examiners for Practical Nurses be established.

The Board of Examiners for Practical Nurses was to consist of the Registered Nurse Board of Examiners and three practical nurses selected in the same manner.

In 1948 the Board instructed its Legal Counsel to protest

a ruling of the Attorney General holding that funds held by the Arkansas State Board of Nurse Examiners could not be used for a University School of Nursing unless the Legislature gave special permission or the law was changed. They also voted to take to the convention a proposal that Negro professional nurses be allowed membership in ASNA.

In 1949, the acceptance of Negro nurses for membership in ASNA was approved. This was also the year of formation of the Industrial Nurses Section.

At the convention of 1952, ASNA approved the adoption of a forty-hour week for nurses. There was also a recommendation to the Board of Nurse Examiners that student nurse hours in the state be restricted to a forty-hour week, inclusive of classes and clinical practice.

The convention of 1954 brought about the following changes in the Nurse Practice Act: (1) increase of registration fees from \$1 to \$3; (2) clearly defining the duties and powers of the Board of Nurse Examiners; (3) redefinition of "nursing" and (4) bringing the psychiatric technician into the framework of nursing. This last measure failed.

Around 1954 the ASNA joined with the Arkansas Hospital Association, the Arkansas League for Nursing, and the Arkansas State Medical Society in forming the Arkansas Joint Commission for Improvement of Patient Care. This organization studied such issues of interest and concern as nursing functions study, mobilizing hospital personnel for better patient care, hospital discharges, the use of nursing homes, visiting nurse



associations, problems of small hospitals that affect patient care, and teaching hospital aides.

At a January 14 meeting in 1955, it was reported that ASNA's proposed revision of the Nurse Practice Act was opposed by the Arkansas Hospital Association Legislative Committee because there was no provision for nurses aides and because there was no provision for representation of the Arkansas Hospital Association on the Board of Examiners for the accreditation of schools of nursing.

In 1958 the Board of Directors adopted the ASNA Philosophy: "We believe in the worthwhilness of every nurse and that each has a contribution to make. We also believe that each individual living in Arkansas and the whole world deserves good nursing care, and that these ideals will be reached by this Association continuing to promote the objectives of ASNA."

Qualification and gubernatorial practices in appointing members of the Board of Nurse Examiners held attention of the Executive Board at a meeting in 1959. They instructed that Legal Counsel be contacted for an opinion from the Attorney General on whether or not the Governor could, under the Nurse Practice Act of 1955, make appointments to the Board of Nurse Examiners other than from the list submitted by ASNA.

By 1960, the problem of appointments to the Arkansas State Board of Nurse Examiners was still unresolved. The Executive Board of ASNA met with the R.N. Division of the Board of Examiners to discuss a lack of director for ASBNE,

accumulation of ASBNE funds which could be used constructively, nurse practicing without current registration, and unprofessional conduct of nurses. The Legal Counsel for the Board of Examiners stated that proof of unprofessional conduct must be in a written, notarized statement giving full particulars.

The Board also disapproved of the use of the title "Graduate Technician Nurse" and voted that a report on the findings of the Board on "GTN" programs at Arkansas Baptist Hospital be turned over to the Board of Nurse Examiners as a violation of the Nurse Practice Act.

At the present time the ASNA is busy trying to make the following changes in the Nurse Practice Act: (1) to lower the age limit for taking the State Board exam; (2) to permit qualified nurses who are not citizens of the United States to obtain a license; and (3) to remove Practical Nurses from the State Board of Nurse Examiners.

## ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF NURSE EXAMINERS

In 1912 the Graduate Nurses Association of Arkansas, appointed a special committee to draw up a bill that would create a State Board of Nurse Examiners for the registration and licensure of nurses in Arkansas. The Board of Nurse Examiners' first responsibility is implementing the Nurse Practice Act to meet the nursing needs for the people of Arkansas.

The Arkansas State Board of Nurse Examiners formed an organization on April 11, 1913. The Board then consisted of four nurses and one doctor appointed by the Governor. At the first meeting on April 18, they elected the first officers— a President and a Secretary-Treasurer. During this all important meeting, licensure card and application forms were drawn up. They also decided upon the following subjects to be prepared for the first exam: Practical Nursing, Surgery, Diet Cooking, Obstetrics, Care of Child, Genito-Urinary, Hygiene, Contagious Diseases, and Physiology. A percentile of seventy-five in each study was required for passing. On June 13, the State Seal of the Arkansas State Board of Nurse Examiners was approved. The first curriculum for training schools in Arkansas was approved by the Arkansas Board of Education on October 30, 1913.

During the early years the Board met intermittently for

the purpose of examining candidates for Arkansas licensure. After these examinations, the papers were graded and certificates issued immediately. In this way, it was possible for the Board Members to take care of the limited amount of work themselves. During the years between 1913 and 1929, only original certificates were issued. Because of the great deal of work required, no annual renewal was required until 1929.

In 1925 two doctors and three nurses were appointed to the Board. In 1926 two doctors and four nurses were appointed.

The first Arkansas certificate to be revoked was in 1926. The reason was, "Obtained under false pretense." After an amendment in 1945 removing the doctors from the Board, six Registered Nurses assumed posts on the Board. In 1947 the Practical Nurse Division was created when the 1947 Nurse Practice Act came into effect. This made the Nurse Practice Act a mandatory law. It was also at this time the Practical Nurses were first licensed.

Annual renewal of license began in 1930 with the hiring of an Educational Secretary who was employed to handle the work of the Board. An interesting quote from the minutes of May, 1932, Board meeting reads: "The following problems were discussed: (1) the low daily average in all hospitals, (2) an over supply of Nurses, (3) a constructive plan for helping smaller hospitals discontinue their training schools and employ attendants and graduate nurses."

## FORMER TRAINING SCHOOLS

In 1897 Wayland Training School for Nurses was started. After a two year course, six nurses received diplomas. A second class of six students graduated in 1901. The hospital was begun by Mrs. Wayland because St. Vincent's Hospital had been closed and the city of Little Rock had no hospital. There is no verified information in either local newspapers or other records about Wayland Hospital.

After the state General Assembly made the law providing that training schools for nurses could be established in qualified hospitals in February, 1901, Little Rock City Council created the first training school under the new law at Logan H. Roots Memorial Hospital. During the twenty-two years of its life, many graduates were certified to the mayor by the faculty and had a diploma bearing the seal of Little Rock.

The training school at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hot Springs was established with four students in 1905. In 1905 the study required two years and two months, but it was changed to three years in 1922. Entrance requirements were four years or more of high school education. The school was closed in approximately 1957.

A training school at Ozark Sanitarium was established in 1907 with four people in the first graduating class. All the graduates of this school were engaged in war service. The

training school was discontinued in 1926.

In 1912 a training school for nurses was established at Fayetteville City Hospital. During the three year course, the students spent six months at Michael Reece in Chicago. A total of fifty-five nurses graduated from this school.

A training school for nurses was established at Leo N. Levi Hospital in Hot Springs in 1914 but it did not actually open until 1915. When the school closed in 1952, students were sent to other schools for completion of requirements. Among these were ten male students who were accepted and graduated from the Arkansas Baptist Hospital.

Warner Brown Hospital School of Nursing in El Dorado was closed in June of 1966. The length of this program of study was thirty-three months, including eighteen weeks vacation.

## APPROVED SCHOOLS OF NURSING IN ARKANSAS

- I. Baccalaureate Degree Programs
  - A. University of Arkansas School of Nursing
    - 1. Fayetteville and Little Rock
    - 2. Facilities
      - a. University of Arkansas
      - b. University Medical Center
      - c. L.R.V.A. Hospital
      - d. Arkansas State Hospital
      - e. Little Rock and North Little Rock Public Health Agencies
      - f. Visiting Nurses Association
    - 3. Four year program
  - B. Ouachita Baptist University
    - 1. Arkadelphia and Little Rock
    - 2. Facilities
      - a. Ouachita Baptist University
      - b. Arkansas Baptist Hospital
      - c. Community Health Agencies
    - 3. Four year program
- II. Diploma Programs
  - A. St. Edward Mercy Hospital School of Nursing
    - 1. Fort Smith
    - 2. Facilities
      - a. St. Edward Mercy Hospital
      - b. Fort Smith Junior College, Basic Sciences
      - c. St. Louis State Hospital, Psychiatric Nursing
      - d. Public Health Department, Community Health Nursing
      - e. Arkansas Rehabilitation Center, Rehabilitation Nursing
    - 3. Two-10 month school sessions, one-9 month school session
  - B. Sparks Memorial Hospital School of Nursing
    - 1. Fort Smith
    - 2. Facilities
      - a. Sparks Memorial Hospital
      - b. Fort Smith Junior College, Basic Sciences
      - c. Arkansas State Hospital, Psychiatric Nursing
    - 3. Thirty month program
  - C. St. Vincent Infirmary School of Nursing
    - 1. Little Rock
    - 2. Facilities
      - a. St. Vincent Infirmary
      - b. V.A. Hospital, Psychiatric Nursing
      - c. Little Rock University, Basic Sciences