

The American Journal of Nursing and the socialization of a profession, 1900–1920

The editorial position and content of each issue of the first 20 years of the *American Journal of Nursing* were explored in relation to the emergence of nursing as a profession. Themes identified reflect professional issues, socialization of nurses, and the influences between other major social/political movements. The evidence of the study reveals strong nursing leadership toward (1) legitimatizing nursing as a self-controlled profession and (2) generating reform in nursing and society at large. The evidence of this study contradicts many prevalent popular views about the history of nursing.

Charlene Eldridge Wheeler, BSN, MS
President
Margaretdaughters, Inc.
Akron, New York

...every fifty years women have to reinvent the wheel.^{1(p11)}

It begins to seem almost axiomatic that in patriarchal societies what dare not be remembered is forgotten, what cannot be forgotten is buried, what will not stay buried is degraded or reversed.^{2(p64)}

A large subject is like a mountain, which no beholder ever sees entire: if [she] climbs it [she] discovers only selected aspects, if [she] stands off, [she] sees but an outline and from one side only; if [she] flies over it, [she] flattens it out.^{3(p156)}

PURPOSE AND METHOD

This study examines the official journal of a major nursing organization in relation to the emergence of professional issues. The *American Journal of Nursing* was selected for the following reasons: (1) it has had a lengthy period of continuous publication; (2) it began and is still regarded as the official publication of a national association of nurses; and (3) it is a historical resource available to many nurse students

and practicing nurses. A period spanning the first 20 years of publication was selected because those years represent the emergence of professional literature in the context of a large professional association. Additionally, the editorial leadership remained fairly stable during that time; the first major shift occurred in 1920.⁴

The volumes of the journal examined for this study are housed in the library of a large state university with a nursing school that has both undergraduate and graduate nursing programs. Neither program offers a discrete required course in nursing history. The university is located in a large metropolitan area with one other graduate nursing program, four other baccalaureate programs, and several diploma and associate degree programs.

The issues of *The American Journal of Nursing* were reprinted in 1962 (volumes 1-9) and 1967 (volumes 10-20) by Johnson Reprint Corporation. The copies had been trimmed of all covers and advertising and some front matter. It was a deliberate choice to use these less-than-ideal volumes for this study, to determine what historical evidence exists within the resources relatively accessible to a substantial population of nurse students, faculty, and practicing nurses.

The editorial in each issue of *The American Journal of Nursing* was examined as well as the content of the articles. The content was categorized by decade, to identify themes related to the following research questions.

- What professional issues captured the attention of nurses during this period, and how were they conceptualized?
- How was the socialization of nurses into the profession presented?

- Who were the major contributors to the journal, and what disciplines/occupations were represented?
- To what extent did the content of the journal attempt to define and influence "professionalism" in nursing?
- To what extent did the journal's content reflect an awareness of and influence by major social/political movements?

SIGNIFICANCE

The profession of nursing has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, but it is not well-known. To state that the study of nursing history is relevant for every nurse student and practicing nurse may seem simplistic and obvious, but this is not the norm. It is a common experience for graduates of nursing schools to complete an entire curriculum without learning about the early nursing leaders, much less the nature of their contributions. When reference is made to a nurse from a bygone era, the nurse is often overtly or covertly degraded and represented as somewhat of an oddity, a crock, or abnormal.

Consistent with the neglect or trivialization of nursing history, the messages conveyed through nursing education regarding proper "professional" norms are often distorted and confusing. For many nurses educated in the 1950s-1970s and now practicing, several messages about professionalization were conveyed through their education:

- The "good nurse" is soft-spoken and demure and would never bring embarrassment to the profession through unprofessional conduct.

- The uniform, cap, and pin are to be treated as sacred symbols of a noble profession.
- Membership in the professional organization (American Nurses' Association [ANA]) and subscription to the official nursing journal (*American Journal of Nursing*) are prerequisites to being considered a professional nurse.

Comparing the behavior of practicing nurses with these guidelines results in a considerable amount of cognitive dissonance. In recent nursing literature, there has been examination of reasons for young nurses' disillusionment with their chosen field and the failure to sustain a professional identity, but these analyses do not include a strong or positive historical interpretation.

The socialization of the nurse student into the profession is partly instilled through textbooks. If the heritage of nursing is considered to be an important vehicle for professional socialization, guidance for the present should be based on lessons from the past. On the contrary, nursing history textbooks are notable for failing to bring relevant lessons of the past forward to the present. Many current norms of practice and professional behavior are perpetrated and enacted without a full understanding of their emergence in history or of their relevance for today's practice.

In one current nursing history textbook, the presentation of early nursing leaders could not be more skillfully arranged to

create lack of interest in these women and what they did.⁵ It may be that the distortion of the events of nursing history is not deliberate, but the approach is one of seductive obliteration.

In discussing the "problems of a developing profession" in the early 1900s, the authors state: "Despite nurse's willingness to be subordinate, the appearance of trained nurses inevitably involved conflicts with physicians and agency administrators."^{5(p134)} This statement is a seduction into accepting (1) that the subordinate/dominant paradigm was normal and (2) that all nurses wanted to be subordinate. If these two assertions are not accurate, an entirely different perspective would be acquired on today's power issues within nursing, and nursing's professional image would be radically altered. This investigation was initiated in part by a curiosity about the accuracy of present portrayals of this sort.

A preliminary search for evidence of the accuracy of the portrayal of Lavinia Dock in this same nursing history textbook provided impetus for further search. The authors state that "Dock did not approve of World War I; in keeping with her disapproval, she would permit no mention of war in her department of the journal."^{5(p142)} Although this statement is accurate, through the omission of Dock's rationale for her position, the reader is presented with a picture of a dyspeptic individual who performed her editorial role irresponsibly. Dock was not alone in her disapproval of the war, nor can her performance of the editorial duties be considered irresponsible when viewed in context with those of the editor of the *American Journal of Nursing*, Sophia Palmer.

Nursing history textbooks are notable for failing to bring relevant lessons of the past forward to the present.

Dock's sentiments are clearly supported by Sophia Palmer, who states: "but who can rejoice in any success which means the slaughter of thousands, the desolation of homes, the retardation of industry."^{6(p2)} Palmer speaks of the horrors, the sorrow, and the heartache of war and notes how strange it is to observe "the spectacle of one group of people promoting war while another, with equal ardor, endeavors to alleviate the suffering it is causing."^{7(p181)}

There is little doubt that those who are endeavoring to alleviate the suffering of war are the women, the nurses. Far from being a gatekeeper who irresponsibly censored war news, as the authors imply, Dock's own statements as to why she would not publish accounts of the horrors of war and of the devastation experienced by the nurses of foreign countries are eloquently stated positions of solidarity with the nurses who were surviving under conditions of war.⁸⁻¹¹

It is difficult to trace the origins of thought that socialize millions of women in the profession of nursing. The creation of the culture, the norms, and the roles in the profession of nursing is a vast development that defies simplistic explanations. A reexamination of the history and culture of nursing, from a perspective of respect and a commitment to valuing the contributions of early nurse leaders, holds great potential for contributing to our collective understanding of today's professional issues.

First decade: 1900–1910

Foundations for autonomy

The American Journal of Nursing was first published in October 1900 as the "official organ of the Nurses' Associated Alumnae

of the United States; the American Society for Superintendents of Training Schools for Nurses; the Order of Spanish American War Nurses; the Guild of St Barnabas; and the New York State Nurses' Association."¹² Sophia Palmer was named editor-in-chief and continued to edit the journal until her death in 1920. (She died of a cerebral hemorrhage at the age of 70 years at her home in Rochester, NY.⁴) For the first 9 months with the journal she worked without pay while she was reorganizing the City Hospital of Rochester. The headquarters of the journal offices for the two decades was in Rochester.

The rationale and purposes for establishing the journal were clear.

For many years the profession has been indebted to the nursing journals already in the field for cordial cooperation in many lines. . . . Still these journals have not been owned or controlled by nurses, and with the rapid strides that the profession is making in every direction, journalism would seem to be a necessary part of the trend of nursing progress.^{13(p64)}

The editorial sense was that an association whose membership was scattered geographically needed to communicate through a recognized official channel. Thus the *American Journal of Nursing* was developed as an official channel of communication.

The editorial staff was selected with great care and much obvious pride: "The names of the women selected to manage and edit the magazine should be a sufficient guarantee of the conscientious and thorough manner in which the work will be performed. Each name stands for a recognized force in the nursing world."^{13(p64)}

The aim of the journal was to present month by month "the most useful facts, the most progressive thought and the latest news that the profession has to offer."^{13(p65)} Comprised of educators and supervisors, the editorial staff pledged to address relevant issues: "All the great questions will be taken up in turn,—State organization, the army nursing service, and the educational projects of vital importance to the nurse of the future."^{13(p65)}

The journal was neatly divided into content sections; these divisions remained the standard format for most of the first decade. The language and phrases in the early issues of the journal seem slightly awkward to today's reader. For example, various departments were "in Charge of" an individual. That person may or may not have written the information but apparently was responsible for the content of the section. Some inconsistency is apparent in the recognition of contributors. Although the authorship of some items and sections was clearly identified, the authorship of certain sections was not clear.

The following sections were included.

- Original Communications consisted of selections similar to articles in current magazines and ranged from travelogs to discussions of the law as it affected nursing practice.
- Practical Points in Private Nursing (in charge of Isabel McIsaacs) included articles by women that addressed the nature of private nursing: the practice of a nurse who hired herself, generally to someone of financial means, providing home care on a 24-hour basis, often with a live-in arrangement, since care could continue for an extended period of time.

- Children's Department (in charge of Louise C. Brent) related to the care and feeding of infants and young children.
- Educational (in charge of Isabel Hampton Robb) focused on hospital economics.
- Progressive Movements (in charge of Lucy L. Drown) promoted employment opportunities for nurses that lay outside the realm of private nursing or hospital nursing.
- Prophylactics (in charge of Mary M. Riddle) usually consisted of solicited articles from physicians that dealt with such issues as the relation of bacteriology to preventive medicine.
- Hospital and Training School Item (in charge of Linda Richards) announced programs offered and alterations in approaches to training, as the number of nursing training schools increased.
- Foreign News: Organization Notes and Current Events (in charge of Lavinia Dock) contained news of nursing in other countries, reports on registration advancements and efforts in other countries, and announcements and updates on the establishment and organization of nursing groups in each of the United States.
- Editor's Miscellany consisted of letters from readers and announcements or items of interest that had arrived too late for classification.

In the first issue, the only contributors identified by title were physicians. There was no indication that the women who contributed articles were nurses or of their employment affiliation. Considering that this was the first issue and that registration for nurses was not yet a reality, it is not surprising that titles for nurse authors were

not used. As the journal matured, a nurse author was often identified as "graduate" or "Superintendent" of a school. As registration in the individual states became a reality, the title RN became more widely used by contributing nurse authors.

Professional issues

There is strong evidence that the leaders of the Associated Alumnae were very concerned about gaining the recognition of nursing as a profession. In November 1900, apparently the time was right to begin agitating for registration of nurses. In the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Associated Alumnae (one of the official groups founding the journal), the president, Isabel Hampton Robb, referred to the "profession of nursing." She stated:

As many of us know, the question of registration for trained nurses has been long in our minds, but we were also aware that to advocate legislation for nurses eight or ten years ago would have been to 'put the cart before the horse.' At that time, no *esprit de corps* existed among the leaders in our schools. Nothing much in the way of systematizing teaching was recognized; certainly no uniformity in curriculum and not even an attempt at a general education and ethical standard. . . . Among the nurses there was no professional feeling. Collectively we could neither qualify as a profession, a calling, a trade.^{14(pp100-101)}

The assumption seems to be that the time was right to promote legislation for nurses and to move into true professionalism. The action targeted does not seem too different from the action advocated by many nursing leaders today.

For to be a member of a profession implies more responsibility, more serious duties, a

higher skill, and work demanding a more thorough education than is required in many other vocations in life. But two things are needful: organization and legislation . . . State registration is certainly the next and most important step towards achieving a fixed professional standard. . . . Only by a complete system of regulation will it be possible for trained nursing to attain to its full dignity as a recognized profession and obtain permanent reforms.^{14(pp101-102)}

The editorial in this same issue focused on registration as the one critical means toward professionalism: "Registration, with its two great principles, must bring the needed protection,—first in giving a better training to the nurse of the future, followed by protection to the public and the regular graduate."^{15(p167)} During the rest of that first year, the cry for registration was continued, but radical seeds were being planted in other arenas; nurses were urged to become familiar with parliamentary law so they could have a more powerful voice in public meetings, and the Associated Alumnae openly allied themselves with the National Council of Women.^{16(p316)}

The second year began with the editor expressing the sentiment that the journal was a "professional success," enjoying a reputation of "being dignified in character and of having a high professional status on a broad educational basis." A new department was added, Notes from the Medical Press, which was intended to give in condensed form such new methods and scientific medical facts as are necessary for the nurse in the most intelligent care of the sick."^{17(p73)} There was an open acknowledgment that nursing could learn from the medical literature but no reflection of the

The early nursing leaders were determined to have nursing under the direction of women in nursing and saw legislation as a means to accomplish this end.

notion that nurses desired to be or were willing to be subservient to physicians.

The relationship of nursing to medicine was very clear to these early nursing leaders. They were determined to have nursing under the direction of women in nursing and saw legislation as a means to accomplish this end.

In this country we have so far avoided the mistake of organizing in conjunction with medical men or laymen. . . . We believe that when we have obtained 'state registration,' preliminary education on the basis of that provided for the members of the other professions, and recognition with the other professions, that our position in relation to medical men will undergo a change. . . . In the long years to come, when all of these problems shall have, by degrees, worked themselves out, the trained nurse will rank, not as a subordinate of the medical man, but as his associate.^{18(pp240-241)}

They also recognized that determination was not enough to accomplish all their dreams in a lifetime: "But this marvellous change will not take place until long after the women of to-day have passed over to the great majority."^{18(p241)}

The journal editors did not allow personal conviction regarding nursing as a profession to cloud the commitment to publishing opposing points of view. Two articles in the August 1902 issue were written by physicians. In the first, the

physician asked, "Is yours a profession?" and then proceeded to warn the readers about dire consequences of believing it to be so. "But by your own desire to be classed as a profession you subject yourselves to such critical treatment as I and others have mercilessly applied to the physician. I am not sure that you are wise to so label yourselves."^{19(pp900-901)} He continued by focusing on the areas of nursing that needed reform and appeared to fully support the registration of nurses and the standardization of training that would entail. He did not indicate, however, that these measures would necessarily bestow on nursing recognition as a profession.

In the second article by a physician, "Is nursing really a profession?", the answer was again "no." The reasons were different from those enumerated by the first physician, but the conclusion was the same. The points raised were that nursing would never attain true professional status as long as the primary educators of nurse students were physicians. The physician strongly advised that nursing had no discrete body of knowledge to share freely with other members of the field and with humanity.²⁰ Nursing leaders were quick to use the words of these two physicians for promoting their own cause. The pages of the journal were filled with promotion of registration, urgings for the standardization of educational methods and content, and renewed emphasis that the governing boards should reflect only nurses making decisions regarding nurse training and registration.

As the decade continued, the conviction grew among nursing leaders that state registration was the first tangible step toward a genuine professional basis for

nurses. They were convinced that registration would provide nursing a recognized place along with the other professions. It was clear to these women that, through registration, a minimum standard of education for the nurse would be established by law; they also envisioned that these developments would proceed along lines directed by nurses as an organized body.

The profession of nursing was seen to be an occupation for women but not isolated from the broader community of women: "neither must we stand apart, satisfied to work only with, and for, the women of our chosen profession. We are a part of the great woman's movement of the age in which we live, and women in other lines of work need us, just as much as we need them, to prevent our becoming narrow and one-sided."²¹(p330) Of great concern to this generation of nurses were the working conditions of women and children in industry. Dock noted that all nurses had to buy their clothing somewhere and strongly encouraged every nurse not to buy clothing unless it had the union label as a guarantee that it had not been produced in the sweatshops that exploited women and children.²² In 1906, following Susan B. Anthony's death, the journal published a tribute to this woman who had worked so hard for so many years to "improve the condition of women."²³(p197)

By 1909, nearly every article contributed by a nurse had the title RN following the name. In the event that the contributor was not registered, careful attention was given to listing her affiliation. Articles from physicians were still published, but the number had decreased substantially. The editors of the journal were convinced they had done their job well. In a 1910 editorial, Palmer

makes note of the progress and the journal's role in state registration.

State registration was only a dream when the Journal was first issued; now there are laws for the registration of nurses in 23 states, with the standards which the Journal advocated practically uniform. Nursing education has advanced and been harmonized wherever these laws exist. In all this work, the Journal has been the Chief guide and inspiration of the workers.²⁴(p929)

As the first decade of publication drew to a close, with victory feeling sweet, the women did not lose their sense of purpose or their drive toward reform. They began agitating for completing the reorganization of the national and local nursing associations, to mobilize some political clout. The next set of problems appeared to be devising some means of supervising registered nurses and requiring a general standard of ethics. Nursing leaders began to express considerable concern about providing nursing care for the "great middle class." During this era, the nurse provided care to either the wealthy, who could afford to pay for her services, or to the poor, for whom services were provided by some charitable organization. Consistently, the motives and driving forces of these early nursing leaders appear to have been predominantly altruistic.

Second decade: 1910-1920

The second decade of the journal began with tributes to two nursing leaders who had "passed over to the great majority": Florence Nightingale and Isabel Hampton Robb. These two women died within a few months of one another, Nightingale at the

age of 90 years and Robb at age 50, because of an accident. The contents of one issue contained glowing tributes from a number of associates and individuals who remembered each of these women; excerpts from speeches, letters, and other writings were shared with the readers. There is a great sense that these early nursing leaders were revered, deeply loved, and respected for their diversity and non-conformity. It is apparent that nurses of that era encouraged one another in open discussion, supported conflict, and invited critique, because they were all dedicated to one goal: to move nursing forward onto a solid foundation. Although their approaches may have differed and they could disagree vehemently on method, they did not discredit one another on the basis of noncompliance with a specific line of thought.

In this decade of the journal, editorials began to emphasize membership in the professional organization as a true moral duty for the practicing nurse.

The superintendent who runs her own school beautifully, but fails to take part in any of the superintendents' societies, national, state, or local; the head nurse who keeps her ward in excellent running order, but who does not belong to her alumnae association and knows nothing of nursing affairs outside her own institution; the private nurse who is faithful and unselfish in the care of her own patients, but pursues her path alone, without giving or receiving help; the district nurse who is efficient and helpful in her own sphere, but who cannot be depended upon in any organization work,—all these are missing part of the opportunity and obligation of professional service, and both they themselves, and their work will be the poorer for their failure in the end.^{25(p3)}

Social issues

There was great emphasis on morality, in terms of concern for society and for the profession. In the editorial of October 1910, managers of public institutions were charged with the dual responsibility of protecting the individuals under their care and the community. Palmer spoke with outrage of two instances of "shocking neglect" involving principles that undermine "individual and community morals": the blatant disregard for treatment and protection of women who had been confined for venereal disease; and the decision of trustees of a hospital who chose to graduate a student, in opposition to the decision of the superintendent, because the

In the second decade of the journal, there was great emphasis on morality, in terms of concern for society and for the profession.

student had become "involved in a scandal with a prominent man."^{25(p4)}

Patient care issues were discussed at length, often with an expressed concern for morality. Catheterization of the male patient was hotly debated in the editorials and in letters to the editor. The editor urged caution in requiring nurses (women) to perform this task because it involved a "... moral as well as a professional question."^{25(p6)}

Throughout the early part of the decade, nurses were urged to take an active part in "moral prophylaxis": the teaching and distribution of knowledge regarding the spread and prevention of gonorrhea and syphilis. In a series of articles on sex

hygiene and moral prophylaxis published for 5 consecutive months in 1911, Dr. George P. Dale detailed the symptoms of "gonorrhoea and syphilis," ophthalmia neonatorum, and locomotor ataxia, as well as the significance of these diseases for men, women, and children and for the professions. "The increase in acquired venereal infections in children is greater than the medical profession or the laity realize, and the increasing frequency of the criminal infection of baby girls makes the subject a matter of grave concern. Vulvovaginitis in its simple form is not at all uncommon in girls between the ages of 5 and 12 in all walks of life."²⁶(p783)

Repeatedly, in the editorials of the journal during the first half of the decade, nurses were informed of literature that would enable them to better educate their patients, both for the teaching of sex hygiene and for moral prophylaxis. Nurses began contributing articles to the journal addressing these topics. One article²⁷ urged nurses to instruct people of all ages about sex hygiene and included an extensive bibliography of reading material. In another article,²⁸ the pharmacology and side effects of treatment for syphilis were discussed.

The pages of the journal frequently reported on political action taken by nurses against the Page bill, and nurses were urged in editorials to campaign against the "social evil." Nurses of New York State passed a protest resolution, and in September 1911 the editorial notes that "... the nursing profession has had a share"²⁹(p1002) in having clause 79 of the Page bill declared unconstitutional. The Page bill allowed any woman to be arrested for suspicion of prostitution, held in jail at

least 24 hours or until her bacteriology results were available for reporting, and publicly charged with the crime of being infected with a social disease.

Nurses protested the bill for several reasons. It ostensibly existed to provide and enforce health care for sick women, but the real illnesses of women of the lower classes, such as malnutrition and tuberculosis were being ignored. Nursing leaders recognized the sham of focusing health care legislation on lower-class women and the treatment of venereal disease. They assigned responsibility as they perceived it: "This [the neglect of real health problems] makes it seem more than ever as if the Page bill aimed only at treating medically those women who are in demand as prostitutes by the better classes of men."³⁰(p139)

The journal was not without critics of its position on morality. A speaker at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Superintendents of Training Schools harshly criticized the *American Journal of Nursing*. The editor responded with characteristic candor:

In an address entitled 'The Making of an Ideal Nursing Journal,' Mary A. Catton . . . discussed the subject with much intelligence, but we have to disagree with her on one point. She says: 'To be clean, a journal must keep out of its pages articles dealing with the moral and professional shortcomings of nurses and physicians, articles dealing with prophylactic measures necessary in certain specific diseases, articles dealing with the pros and cons of certain duties in the nursing care of male patients.'

The whole world has, in the last few years, wakened to a recognition of the fact that it is what has been called 'the conspiracy of silence' more than any other factor which has brought

about the shocking prevalence of social diseases, the white slave traffic, and all the ills that follow in their wake. We think to exclude the discussion of such subjects from nursing magazines would be to take a cowardly attitude as no group of people needs enlightening more than nurses, both for their own protection, and because no other group of workers is better qualified to act as teachers after they are properly informed.^{31(p1001)}

The discussions of the Page bill confirm that early nursing leaders were not isolated from their community and were leaders in the women's movement. "Women who have actively opposed the degradation of their sex by the introduction into NY state of continental standards of immorality [the Page bill] have been active suffragists. Those who have accepted the men's point of view in defense of the cause have been, with rare exception, pronounced antisuffragists."^{29(p1002)} "The whole course of the Page law clause has been one of the most striking illustrations of the need of women for the franchise and one of the strongest arguments for its bestowal that current events have yet offered."^{29(p1003)}

Prior to 1913, the official organizational position on suffrage was one of neutrality. An article was published in favor of suffrage,³² but a companion article³³ was published in the same issue in strident opposition to suffrage. The editorial in that issue encouraged readers to consider the matter of suffrage but expressed doubt that suffrage was an appropriate concern for the journal.³⁴ By 1913, that position was dynamically reversed. The editorial of April 1913 published in full

Miss McIsaac's report of the experience of the nursing section of the suffrage parade on March 3, in Washington.... Because the

American Nurses' Association, of which this JOURNAL is the official organ, has voted in favor of equal suffrage, we publish it here, in order to give the magazine's endorsement to the sentiments she expresses.^{35(p188-189)}

It can only be surmised that the experience of dealing with moral prophylaxis and the Page bill had a beneficial and radicalizing effect on these early nursing leaders.³⁶

During the second decade of the journal, the reasons for the view of the nursing uniform as sacred became apparent. Given the climate of prostitution, white slavery, sexual abuse of children, the seemingly overwhelming moral decay of society, and the early leaders' commitment to gain professional recognition of nursing, the uniform became a symbol. In the editorial pages,³⁷ there were several accounts of women who were not nurses but wore the uniform of the nurse as they solicited for prostitution. Nurses were instructed never to wear the uniform on the street and were reminded of the dire consequences for the profession if the public lost its respect for the nurse and perceived her to be of low moral character.

The issue of state registration was not abandoned during this time, but the majority of the work was perceived to be accomplished. Other issues relating to registration were beginning to emerge. Reciprocity of registration between states was seen as a desirable and expected outcome once the standards of education became more universal. State registration was not yet compulsory but was strongly urged because of the benefits to those who were registered. Additionally, registration was becoming necessary for appointments to certain positions, as well as for membership in most nursing organizations.

With the registration laws came new obligations and new struggles. The energies of the early nursing leaders were concentrated on defining the qualifications of nurses acting as inspectors of training schools and members of the boards of examiners. The emphasis was once again on morality: "The personal qualifications of such state officers should come before everything else. They should be women of integrity, whose moral status has never been questioned. In this respect nursing is unlike any other profession, the standards of morality such as are maintained by men cannot be accepted."^{38(p418)} There was identification of the source of difficulty in making satisfactory and speedy progress in the reform of training schools and the standardization of education for nurses: "the multiplicity of small hospitals owned by medical men, where training schools are maintained for strictly commercial purposes is the greatest problem. . . . It is a condition which prevails to a greater or less degree all over the country."^{38(p420)}

Physician opposition to the organization and registration of nurses accelerated as nursing gained greater access to the legislature. A number of forces converged to distract nursing from one focused path. In 1912, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company proposed the use of untrained women for care of patients with chronic disease under the supervision of regular trained nurses, for "motives of economy."^{39(p277)} The American Hospital Association Committee recommended that nurse attendants who were trained in hospitals too small to maintain a training school that met nursing registration standards should act as assistants to graduates.³⁹ Thus, there was introduction of levels of preparation

for providers and a decided movement of the medical profession to exert control over nursing and to undermine the standards that had been gained with great difficulty.

Nursing leaders continued to express grave concern over the lack of nursing care available for the "great middle classes" and could not see how the new proposals by the physicians would solve what they perceived as a great social need. Editorials in medical journals began denouncing the efforts of the ANA and ridiculing the efforts toward standardization of education. Nursing authors once again assumed a defensive posture and began to explore the issue of professionalism.^{40,41}

Patriotism

With the entry of the United States into World War I, the earlier editorial antiwar

With the entry of the United States into World War I, the earlier editorial antiwar position softened as new opportunities were envisioned for nursing.

position softened as new opportunities were envisioned for nursing. What registration had not yet accomplished, the war might accomplish.

This New Year of 1915 will be epoch-making in the history of Nursing. Never before, since Florence Nightingale went to the Crimea, have nurses been so in the lime-light as they are in consequences of this great European conflict. If the nurses of all the nations concerned and especially those of our own country who are serving in any way what ever in any of the

affected areas, conduct themselves according to the highest ideals of nursing, the importance of the trained woman to society will be demonstrated in such a manner that fuller professional and social recognition will be awarded her than years of peace conditions would bring.^{42(p267)}

As the war effort mounted and the United States became more actively involved, the profession of nursing was under increasing pressure to recruit and supply nurses for war service.

In the November 1917 editorial, the Red Cross Nursing Service pleaded for more women to seek training in nursing schools so that they might "set your patriotic impulses free." It was noted that "it is the professional nurse only who has been accepted."^{43(p81)} With the registered nurse the only eligible candidate for war service at a time when patriotic fervor was at its height, the precedent was set for many more young women to seek training only in schools that complied with the standards of registration.

In January 1918, the patriotic cry became much stronger: "Do not let it go down in history that when the young men of our country were called into service in defense of the democracy of the world, the nurses held back, because of financial reasons or because they shirk from the hardships of war service."^{44(p284)} It would be interesting to know the reason for the shift in focus from a strong antiwar position to an inferred endorsement of the war effort by encouraging nurses to serve in the war. This dilemma seems evident for the journal leaders as they continued to publish strong positions on the ills at home. The journal pages were full of pleas for the improvement of care for the insane, urging

nursing care for patients with tuberculosis, the sick, and the infirm in the almshouses.

If the journal editors' endorsement of nurses serving in the war was a self-serving position for the purposes of furthering the standardization of education and increasing the number of registered nurses, they were no doubt disappointed. The editorial pages had generously supported the efforts of the Red Cross for recruitment of nurses, many pages of the journal were devoted to discussing war news, and developments in techniques at the front that might effect care at home were presented. In July 1918, however, the editorial notes that the Red Cross waived state registration for the period of the war for nurses wishing to serve their country.⁴⁵ It must have been a bitter and difficult time for the leaders in nursing to see an organization they had supported undermine the goals of registration that many of them had worked long and hard to effect, even for the cause of the war effort. The way in which that small announcement was presented speaks eloquently to the sense of betrayal while promoting unity at all costs.

• • •

The first decade of the *American Journal of Nursing* reflects the struggle of nurses to achieve recognition as a profession. Their movements toward legitimating nursing as a self-controlled body, with a standard for training and a legal precedent for licensure and registration reflect their commitment and resolve to generate reforms within nursing. It is apparent that this effort occurred in the midst of incredible odds and intense opposition. The recognition of nursing as a woman's profession was in

consort with a commitment to the broader community of women. That solidarity with and great loyalty to the cause of women's progress was to be a guiding principle for the majority of the first two decades.

It appears that as women concerned themselves with the affairs of men in the context of the war, much was lost to nursing. There were no more glowing tributes to nursing leaders; their passing is only noted. As women's energies were subsumed in the cause of war, there were no more radical critiques of the social ills and their effects on the lives of women and children. As the energies of women were channeled into the war effort, positions emerge that can only be interpreted as destructive to the solidarity that had been so evident among the leaders in nursing.

The early issues of the *American Journal of Nursing* examined in this study contain

rich material. Early nursing leaders were courageous women who dared to dream, to have visions, and to struggle. Their work demands our respect and admiration, not our derision and judgment.

This investigation substantiates the value of knowing and examining our nursing history and culture. Even given the limited scope of this study and the limitations of the materials used, the extent to which the evidence contradicts prevalent views of nursing history is remarkable. Myths of early nursing leaders as subservient and unknowledgeable are clearly contradicted.

One of the most destructive occurrences in nursing is the continual erasure or distortion of the past. It is time to reclaim the heritage of strong, decisive women and to restore to nurses and to the public the knowledge we and they so rightfully deserve.

REFERENCES

1. Spender D: *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982.
2. Morgan R: *The Anatomy of Freedom: Feminism, Physics and Global Politics*. New York, Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1984.
3. Barzun J, Graff HE: *The Modern Researcher*, ed. 3. New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977.
4. Death of the journal editor. *Am J Nurs* 1920;20: pages unnumbered.
5. Bullough V, Bullough B: *The Care of the Sick: The Emergence of Modern Nursing*. New York, Prodist, 1978.
6. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1914;15:1-6.
7. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1914;15:181-186.
8. Dock L: Foreign department. *Am J Nurs* 1914;15:47-48.
9. Dock L: Foreign department. *Am J Nurs* 1914;15:136.
10. Dock L: Foreign department. *Am J Nurs* 1915;15:497-499.
11. Dock L: Foreign department. *Am J Nurs* 1915;15:847-848.
12. Front matter. *Am J Nurs* 1900;1.
13. Palmer S: The editor. *Am J Nurs* 1900;1:64-66.
14. Robb IH: Minutes of the Proceedings of the 3rd Annual Convention of the Associated Alumnae of Trained Nurses of the United States. Address of the president. *Am J Nurs* 1900;1:97-104.
15. Palmer S: The editor. *Am J Nurs* 1900;1:166-168.
16. Palmer S: The editor. *Am J Nurs* 1900;1:316-318.
17. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1901;2:71-74.
18. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1901;2:238-242.
19. Mitchell W: Nurses and their education. *Am J Nurs* 1902;2:899-907.
20. Worcester A: Is nursing really a profession? *Am J Nurs* 1902;2:908-917.
21. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1903;3:329-332.
22. Dock L: The editor. *Am J Nurs* 1901;1:776-778.
23. Susan B. Anthony Memorial Association. *Am J Nurs* 1906;7:197-198.

- 34
24. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1910;10:919-931.
 25. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1910;11:1-8.
 26. Dale GP: Moral prophylaxis. *Am J Nurs* 1911;11:782-788.
 27. Cocke E: Sex hygiene. *Am J Nurs* 1912;12:382-387.
 28. Scovil ER: Salvarson. *Am J Nurs* 1912;12:387-390.
 29. Dock L, in discussion, Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1911;11:993-1003.
 30. Dock L, in discussion, Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1910;11:157-166.
 31. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1911;11:993-1003.
 32. Howe JW: Women and the suffrage. *Am J Nurs* 1909;9:559-566.
 33. Abbott L: The assault on womanhood. *Am J Nurs* 1909;9:566-573.
 34. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1909;9:547-553.
 35. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1913;13:488-497.
 36. Prior to 1971, the leaders of the ANA opposed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). That position was taken after consideration of the issue and with solid rationale, just as was ANA's earlier position on suffrage. By 1971, through the action of a small number of strong nursing leaders, the ANA had reversed its position and become an advocate of the ERA. By 1978, ANA supported the economic boycott of states that had not ratified the amendment. Heide WS: Feminist activism in nursing and health care, in Muff J (ed): *Socialism, Sexism and Stereotyping: Women's Issues in Nursing*. St Louis, Mosby, 1982, pp 255-272.
 37. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1911;12:173-180.
 38. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1911;11:415-424.
 39. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1912;12:277-283.
 40. Messer M: Is nursing a profession? *Am J Nurs* 1914;15:122-125.
 41. Covert E: Is nursing a profession? *Am J Nurs* 1917;18:107-109.
 42. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1915;15:267-273.
 43. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1917;18:81-86.
 44. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1918;18:283-287.
 45. Palmer S: Editorial comment. *Am J Nurs* 1918;18:855-859.