Movers and Makers:
A History of Mercy-Douglass Hospital

Mercy-Douglass Hospital was one of the first hospitals for Black physicians and nurses in Philadelphia at a time when segregation in healthcare was common, if not the law. The graduates of Mercy-Douglass Hospital School of Nursing were some of the first nurses to integrate hospitals after the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 and compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 became a condition for receiving funds from Medicare. Mercy-Douglass Hospital, and the nurses and physicians who worked there, provided the Black Philadelphia community with a high standard of healthcare all while working in the face of systemic racism and overwhelming obstacles. Continued on page 5.
Barbara Bates Center for The Study of The History of Nursing

ABOUT THE CENTER

The mission of the Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing is to thoughtfully analyze the past in order to create and foster new ideas for the future, while simultaneously promoting Penn Nursing’s vision to advance nursing science and produce leaders that will transform healthcare globally. The Bates Center is committed to providing the broadest and highest quality educational programs and is equally committed to disseminating research findings through conferences, publications, and interdisciplinary sharing and collaborations.

By these means, the Center dedicates itself to a leadership role in advancing the public’s knowledge of the history of nursing and healthcare.

CENTER HOURS

Center Hours are Monday through Friday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Scholars planning to conduct research at the Center should e-mail nhistory@nursing.upenn.edu or call 215-898-4502. Our Center staff will respond with a description of the scope and content of relevant materials in the various collections.

Letter from Director Patricia D’Antonio

Some thirty-eight years ago I managed to find Fagin Hall (then the Nursing Education Building) and settle into a newly designed PhD program with classmates (some still amongst my closest friends) whose accomplishments and dreams to impact nursing’s scholarship totally intimidated me. What in the world was I thinking?

Some thirty-eight years later I am still not sure I have any answers. I only know that I have been privileged to watch (and sometimes be a part of) a long project to reestablish the power of historical knowledge in nursing’s quest to establish its disciplinary importance in practice and policy. As John Gaddis has written, the distance of time is our methodological tool, and we use this tool to simultaneously tell stories and to judge their significance. Our quantitative and qualitative colleagues address the limitations of their studies. We, as historians, analyze what has been lost as well as gained in nursing’s historical changes.

I now turn over the privilege of being part of this process to a new generation. This is my last Chronicle. I anticipate a sabbatical year when I can explore the epistemological and practical relationships among nursing and the many constellations of those characterized as their “assistants” and then a formal retirement. And this is the last Chronicle. We are now actively involved in other forms of communication, especially the venues that online and social media affords.

But the Center itself continues to grow, change, and evolve. Most notably, we have just partnered with the library to create a new curator position that will leverage the Center’s depth in collections and data with the library’s new strategic mission of digital content creation and dissemination. Look forward to upcoming announcements. Continued on page 4.

Interdisciplinary Seminar in the History of Public Health & Ethics, November 8, 2017
As I bring my tenure to an end, I want to sincerely thank all of you for your continuous support and encouragement. Your comments when each edition of the Chronicle has been published have been an invaluable source of affirmation and, when necessary, correction. I also want to thank my Advisory Board, first chaired by Neville Strumpf and now by Sandy Lewenson, for their commitment and sage advice. As I’m sure you know, I could not have wished for better colleagues in this enterprise that is the Center than Jessica Clark, Elisa Stroh, Julie Fairman, and Cynthia Connolly.

But it is to our students to whom I leave the future. We now all look to you to ask new questions, seek new answers, and look to broader sources of dissemination about the power of history to lead nursing into its future.

Pat D’Antonio

Mercy-Douglass Hospital was one of the first hospitals for Black physicians and nurses in Philadelphia at a time when segregation in healthcare was common, if not the law. The graduates of Mercy–Douglass Hospital School of Nursing were some of the first nurses to integrate hospitals after the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 and compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 became a condition for receiving funds from Medicare. Mercy–Douglass Hospital, and the nurses and physicians who worked there, provided the Black Philadelphia community with a high standard of healthcare all while working in the face of systemic racism and overwhelming obstacles. With a history like that, it’s no surprise that WHYY would want to bring the story of Mercy-Douglass Hospital and its School of Nursing to a wider audience. And WHYY will do so, when a program about Philadelphia’s first Black Medical Institutions airs as part of WHYY’s Movers & Makers series in February 2023.

Karen Smyles, Producer at WHYY for the Movers & Makers program has always had an interest in Mercy-Douglass and wanted to know more about the hospital in which she was born. Discussions surrounding access and how people of diverse backgrounds navigate the healthcare system is a common conversation in the Black community For Smyles, its more personal. Her husband is a physician who specifically attended Howard University College of Medicine, a historically Black institution, because of its significance to the African American community. He was able to train and be on staff at hospitals of his choice, an experience unlike early Black physicians featured in the WHYY program who were denied that opportunity. The episode will explore the founding and history of Philadelphia’s first Black medical institutions: Frederick Douglass Memorial Hospital, Mercy Hospital, and the ensuing Mercy-Douglass Hospital, and the nursing schools affiliated with the hospitals.

Movers and Makers:
A History of Mercy-Douglass Hospital
Mercy-Douglass Hospital, the product of the merger of the Frederick Douglass Hospital and Mercy Hospital, has a long and storied history. Dr. Nathan Mossell, the first African American to graduate in medicine from the University of Pennsylvania, founded the Frederick Douglass Hospital and School for Nurses in 1895 to create opportunities for Black physicians and women interested in nursing who had been denied the opportunity from other healthcare institutions. A little over ten years later Eugene Hinson, also a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, founded the Mercy Hospital, which opened in 1907. Not long after beginning operations, in 1931, both Mercy and Douglass Hospitals faced a financial crisis. In 1938, first talks of a merger between Mercy and Douglass Hospitals were initiated and eventually they merged in March 1948.

With the legal ending of segregation and increased opportunities for prospective Black nursing students, the School of Nursing graduated its last class in 1960. The Mercy-Douglass Hospital closed in 1973.

The TV program will feature many former Mercy-Douglass staff, including Dr. Robert Clark, Dr. Theodore Whitney, and nurse Juanita Jones. Historian for the local chapter of the National Medical Association Dr. Gerald DeVaughn is also featured. The program also includes archivists and historians at The College of Physicians of Philadelphia as well as Hafeeza Anchrum, PhD, RN, CPAN, a postdoctoral fellow in the Penn Program on Race, Science, and Society, and Patricia D’Antonio, PhD, RN, Director of the Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing.

Dr. Anchrum, who is a historian of healthcare, specifically the history of race and racism in American nursing and healthcare, shared her considerable knowledge based on research done for her dissertation “A New Era In The Fight For Nursing Civil Rights: Mercy-Douglass Hospital School Of Nursing.” Dr. Anchrum provided insight on the educational, cultural, political, and social life of the nursing schools at Mercy, Douglass, and Mercy-Douglass. She also spoke on a range of topics related to the three hospitals and nursing schools, including the context of the time in which they were founded; the role the Black community played in the founding of the institutions and the continuous support that they provided; and the reasons for the merger of Mercy and Douglass in 1948. Dr. Anchrum also underscored the major impact of structural racism and inequality on the status and well-being of all three of those institutions.

A film crew, including Smyles and cinematographers Theron Louis and Dan Rosenthal, visited the Center in October of 2022 to film various artifacts and materials from the Mercy-Douglass collection, which Dr. Anchrum provided context for, and to interview Dr. D’Antonio, who spoke about how both collections came to be held at the Center. Smyles has one simple wish for this program – that it will introduce a wider audience to the history of Frederick Douglass, Mercy, and Mercy-Douglass Hospitals and the Schools of Nursing, that operated at a time of pervasive racism and racial injustice. When asked about her hope for this program, Dr. Anchrum relayed this:

In 2018, while conducting oral histories for my dissertation, I asked Mrs. Geraldine Hatcher, class of 1955 the following question: “What do you want the world to know about Mercy-Douglass?” She responded succinctly, “I want people to know that it was. That it existed. That it’s history.” In this regard, I feel that the production of this television program fulfills her—and their—wish.

The episode is slated to air during Black History Month in February 2023 on WHYY and on WHYY’s website; you can visit the Center at www.nursing.upenn.edu/history for more information about the program.
The legacy of the late Bernardine Mays Lacey, EdD, RN, FAAN is one to be valued and disseminated to all. In conjunction with the Barbara Bates Center, historians Ashley Graham-Perel, Assistant Professor at Columbia University, School of Nursing and Sandra Lewenson, Bates Center Advisory Board Chair and Professor Emeritus at Pace University, are in have curated a video that features Lacey’s oral history, offering the inspirational lessons from her life to a wider audience.

Dr. Lacey [1932-2021] was a trailblazing Black nursing leader, advocate, researcher, educator, and mentor. She was the founding dean at Western Michigan University in 1994 and remained in that position for five years. She went on to serve in several leadership positions throughout her career and served on President Bill Clinton’s task force for Healthcare Reform and Health Care Delivery in 1992. She was a vocal advocate for identifying social disparities, for political activism, and for volunteering.

Following Dr. Lacey’s participation on a panel discussion about diversity and inclusivity at the American Academy of Nursing’s fall 2017 conference, she decided to tell her own story with Lewenson. In her own words, Dr. Lacey shared her experiences with racism in her education and career, and explored some of the difficult truths about racism and the culpable role of nursing in this history.

Based on the article that Graham-Perel and Lewenson first published in the August 2020 issue of the American Journal of Nursing titled, “You Don’t Have Any Business Being This Good: An Oral History Interview with Bernardine Lacey,” the video highlights her journey from the Jim Crow South to becoming a nurse leader, mentor, and educator throughout the country. For the video, Graham-Perel and Lewenson interviewed family, friends, and professional colleagues of Dr. Lacey, where they shared memories of this American Academy of Nursing Living Legend.

The video is organized around her early years growing up in the Jim Crow South, her experience at a segregated school of nursing, her leadership and mentorship of others, and the need for a more inclusive and diverse profession. Along with showcasing her leadership and activism during the civil rights movement of the 1960s that continued throughout her life, it shows her humor, grace, and style.

The authors received grants from the Nursing Education Alumni of Teachers College, Columbia University, and the American Association for the History of Nursing. Lewenson and Graham-Perel completed the production of this video in collaboration with Patricia D’Antonio, Director of the Bates Center, Jessica Clark, the archivist at the Center, and Christopher Cook, video producer and senior project leader at Penn Video Network.

We look forward to sharing Dr. Lacey’s story with a broad audience including students, nurses, health care providers, and the public at large to continue to spark the conversation that Lacey started. Her story is one of strength, perseverance, and meaning that will forever hold a place in the nursing profession.

The video, Dr. Bernardine Mays Lacey: Leading the Way, will be shown at several institutions and can be found online on the Center’s website at www.nursing.upenn.edu/history.

Bernardine Lacey at the American Academy of Nursing Living Legend Awards Ceremony, 2014; (L – R) Daniel Green, Ethan Lacey, Bernardine Lacey, and Amanda Lacey.

Bernardine Lacey at the American Academy of Nursing Conference, 2019; (L – R) Bernardine Lacey, Sandra Lewenson, and Barbara Nicholas, and Sandy Lewenson.
Karen Buhler-Wilkerson  
Faculty Fellowship Reports

Jess Dillard-Wright, PhD, MA, RN, CNM

Nursing has, in some ways, always been engaged in the work of social change, particularly in the United States where we can look to the legacies of Lillian Wald, Lavinia Dock, Isabel Hampton Robb, and Adelaide Nutting and their Progressive-era engagement. This legacy is not uncomplicated, however and leaves critical questions unanswered regarding the engagement of nursing in broad social movements. My work with “Finding CASSANDRA: Nursing, Medicine, and the Radical Health Politics of Social Movements” seeks to tease out the connections between nursing and the social movements of the 20th Century. My interest in this topic grew out of my own efforts to locate and understand activism in nursing, which can be a force for transformation in the world. During a think tank in 2018 at the University of Massachusetts Amherst that focused on activism and nursing organized by Peggy Chinn and folks from the NurseManifest project, I learned about CASSANDRA Radical Feminist Nurses Network. CASSANDRA - a lesbian separatist collective active from 1982 until about 1991 - became the focus of my doctoral dissertation and planted the seeds for my current efforts. Supported in part by the Bates Center - both in terms of funding and in terms of archival holdings - I am now building a broader perspective on the social movements and actors including where nurses showed up - and where they did not. To date, the poetry and correspondence of scholar, educator, and feminist Jo Ann Ashley has been most captivating to me. I deeply appreciated Barbara Bates’ meticulous and detailed travel notes and correspondence on issues relevant to my topic as well. I hope to return to the Bates Center before the end of the year for a deeper dive there and to look at the papers of Ildaura Murrillo-Rohde, Claire Fagin, Mary Starke Harper, and the papers of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses. In addition to my planned return to Bates Center, I plan to visit the Schlesinger Library, the New York Public Library, the Lesbian Herstory Archives, the Sophia Smith Archives and more. A book proposal based on this work is currently under consideration at University of Massachusetts Press and the seeds of several papers have been germinating since my visit to the Bates Center this past September.

Jess Dillard-Wright, PhD, MA, RN, CNM (she/they) lives and works in Western Massachusetts. Jess is a fat, queer, genderqueer, feminist, nurse dissident, parent, partner, and activist-scholar. She/they are an Assistant Professor at University of Massachusetts Amherst Elaine Marich College of Nursing. Jess was the 2021-2022 University of California Irvine Center for Nursing Philosophy fellow and will serve on the American Nurses Association Ethics Advisory Board beginning in January of 2023. She/they are the co-editor of Nursing a Radical Imagination: From Theory and History to Action and Alternate Futures, published by Routledge in November 2022.

Janet Greenlees, PhD

My interest in maternal health inequalities stems from earlier research that explored healthcare provision and uptake in America’s cotton manufacturing communities, where I discovered Lowell Corporation Hospital records (MA); the world’s first employer owned and operated hospital. Into the 1930s, free healthcare was offered to workers, including childbirth services. Yet if they could afford it, female operatives chose to deliver their baby at home or pay for care at another hospital. That stimulated my interest in how low-income women made their maternity care choices and what health and welfare provision was available to them. Researching the textile communities, including Philadelphia, the diversity of providers and the many ways in which care was provided was clear. For over a century, the United States has had one of the western world’s highest rates of maternal and infant mortality, while the city of Philadelphia has consistently struggled with the
associated challenges, providing an ideal case study. The broader project explores the development of maternity provision and patient engagement in low-income American communities from the emergence of prenatal care in the early 1900s through World War II.

This Fellowship was pivotal for investigating the role of nurses and midwives in delivering maternity care to marginalized communities and for understanding how, as practitioners, nurses sought to engage with women unfamiliar with prenatal care, particularly immigrants. Records from the Starr Centre Association and the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) were particularly useful. These organizations visited immigrant neighborhoods, educating women about pregnancy care and the drivers behind provision of care and establishing community initiatives, including nurses, midwives and doctors and involved hospitals, dispensaries and nursing agencies. By understanding the networks that provided healthcare to a cohort of patients largely unable to fully fund their own healthcare, we can better understand the delivery of patient care and the drivers behind provision that sometimes included welfare.

This research has been central to understanding nurses’ role in addressing maternal health inequalities. It will contribute to both an article in preparation and a planned monograph exploring poverty and pregnancy in the United States from c. 1900 through 1945. To complete the book, I need to further my understanding of how race and ethnicity informed maternal health and welfare initiatives, as well as community prenatal education initiatives, alongside those of the Federal Children’s Bureau. That research will take me to other cities, including New York and Washington, DC. This project will also inform my future research tracing the story of the development of maternity care and patient engagement in poor communities throughout the rest of the twentieth century, and which can inform current debates about maternal health inequalities.

Dr. Janet Greenlees is Associate Professor of Health History at Glasgow Caledonian University. Her research interests cover modern America and Britain, particularly histories of gender, health, welfare, poverty and environments. Janet is the Co-Director of the Centre for the Social History of Health and Healthcare (GCU), a research collaboration between scholars at GCU and Strathclyde Universities, and recently became a Co-Editor for the journal Social History of Medicine.

Dr. Elizabeth White and her family. The 109th Evacuation Hospital from 1942 until 1954 and earned a Bronze Star Medal for her service (0.75 cubic feet).

Donovan served from 1942 until 1954 and earned a Bronze Star Medal for her service (0.75 cubic feet).

Processing of these valuable collections is critical to ensure their accessibility to researchers and scholars. To donate to the processing of these, and other, collections, please visit: http://www.nursing.upenn.edu/history/contribute/.

From the Collections: Recent Acquisitions

The Bates Center has been privileged to obtain several new accessions and collections that will enhance and complement our current holdings. These additions highlight the lives and activities of wartime nurses, nursing leadership, and nursing research. Below is a selection of materials donated in the past year. Jessica Clark, Archivist

Doris M. Donovan – We are pleased to receive the photographs, military documents, and histories related to Doris M. Donovan and the 109th Evacuation Hospital from Dr. Elizabeth White and her family. Ms. Donovan was a nurse anesthetist in the Army Nurse Corps and the Chief Nurse of the 109th Evacuation Hospital during World War II. Ms. Donovan served from 1942 until 1954 and earned a Bronze Star Medal for her service (0.75 cubic feet).

Cynthia Freund – Dr. Freund has graciously donated her research conducted for her book “A New Order of Things: Origins of a Nurse Practitioner Movement,” a historical study of the development of the nurse practitioner movement in North Carolina, 1965-1978. Her primary source material includes original program material and interviews with key leaders in nursing, medicine, rural health, and the professional associations of nursing and medicine. This collection consists of digital files and 4.5 cubic feet of physical materials.

Processing of these valuable collections is critical to ensure their accessibility to researchers and scholars. To donate to the processing of these, and other, collections, please visit: http://www.nursing.upenn.edu/history/contribute/.
Anchrum Receives Christy Award

Congratulations are in order for recent graduate Hafeeza Anchrum! Anchrum was awarded the Teresa R. Christy Award from the American Association for the History of Nursing (AAHN). The Teresa R. Christy Award is given to acknowledge the excellence of historical research and writing done while the researcher was a doctoral student.

Anchrum was awarded the Christy award for her completed dissertation, *A New Era In The Fight For Nursing Civil Rights: Mercy-Douglass Hospital School Of Nursing*. Her dissertation examined Black nurses fight for racial equality in healthcare during the civil rights era, battling interlocking racial, gender, and class oppression. Using oral history and archival methodologies, Anchrum drew on the experiences of women who trained and worked at Mercy-Douglass Hospital School of Nursing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her dissertation findings revealed that Black nurses’ struggle for racial equality was more complicated than simply being integrated into the mainstream of nursing.

This is not the first award for Dr. Anchrum’s research on Mercy-Douglass; she recently was awarded the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing’s Marion R. Gregory award, which is awarded to the PhD student whose completed dissertation promises significant contribution to nursing knowledge.

Donors

The Barbara Bates Center for The Study of The History of Nursing gratefully acknowledges all its supporters for their generosity.

Students Updates

Andre Rosario received the Turner Schulman Graduate Fellowship from the Center for the Study of Ethnicity, Race, and Immigration (CSERI) at the University of Pennsylvania.

Kailee Steger received the Terrance & Karyn Holm Endowed Visiting Scholar Award from the Midwest Nursing History Research Center at University of Illinois Chicago College of Nursing.

The 25th annual meeting of the Southern Association for the History of Medicine and Science (SAHMS) is scheduled for March 2 – 4, 2023, at Emory University (Atlanta, GA). Please visit www.sahms.net for more information.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) will hold its virtual spring 2023 conference April 26 – 28, 2023. For more information on the conference visit: https://www.marac.info/spring-2023-conference.

The 96th annual meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine (AAHM) will be held May 11-14, 2023, in Ann Arbor Michigan. More information can be found at www.histmed.org.

The 2023 joint meeting of the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine (CSHM) and the Canadian Association for the History of Nursing (CAHN) will take place May 27 – 29 2023; this conference will be in-person. More information can be found at https://cahn-achn.ca/ or https://cshm-schm.ca/.

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) will co-host the 29th ICN Congress from July 1 – 5, 2023 in Montreal, Canada with the theme: Nurses together: a force for global health. Please visit https://icncongress2023.org/ for more information.

The American Association for the History of Nursing (AAHN) will hold its 40th Annual Nursing & Health Care History Conference September 28 – 30, 2023, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. More information can be found at: https://www.aahn.org/2023-conference.