

From the Desk of the Historian

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June is a wonderful and usually busy month known for its graduations, vacations, and weddings. But did you know how important the month of June is to our nursing profession? A good source of information is the nursing calendar created by the American Association for the History of Nursing. So, let's explore some important June dates.

On June 2, 1861 (just 6 weeks after the start of our Civil War), the US Sanitary Commission was created – based on the care and structures learned from the writings of Florence Nightingale during her time as a nurse in the Crimean War and her book, *Notes on Nursing: What It Is and What It Is Not* (1856). On June 9th, 1861, Dorothea Dix was named the Superintendent of Female Nurses of the Union Army. In recruiting women to serve as nurses, she adhered to Nightingale's list of appropriate attributes: "women between the ages of 25 to 35; unmarried; plain of face; of good moral character; women who much wear hoop less plain brown or gray dresses; be physically fit; and have letters of recommendation" (Giles, 1949 as cited in Hutchinson, 2016).

Fast forward to June 15-17, 1893, the waning years of the Gilded Age in America. Imagine now you will find yourself in Chicago at the Columbian Exposition. Yes, you will go through the exhibits from all over the world, but you are there for a more important reason – you are a nurse answering the call of Isabel Hampton to attend the International Congress of Charities, Correction & Philanthropy occurring during the Exposition. How could you not attend? After all, Miss Hampton – a Bellevue Training School for Nurses alumna and the Director of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing – organized this meeting to discuss issues facing the profession and to make history. At the end of this meeting, the Society of Superintendents of Training Schools was founded.

Early in the 20th Century, diseases such as TB were taking their toll on the American population. Dr. Devine, general secretary of

the Charity Organization Society noted that this disease was rampant among the African American population in New York City and its boroughs. He also recognized the importance of having nurses of color provide sorely needed care. As a result of Dr. Devine's advocacy, Jessie Sleet Scales became the first African American District Nurse treating patients with TB. In 1901, the AJN published "A Successful Experiment" in which Scales wrote about not only her TB cases, but other communicable disease cases of "chicken pox, diphtheria, and pneumonia" (Lee, 2024, <https://blogs.uofi.uic.edu/view/8318/782323582>).

As a result of the increasing number of public health issues, the need for visiting nurses, and research conducted into the feasibility of having another nursing organization besides the ANA and the American Society of Superintendents, June of 1912 witnessed the creation of the National Organization for Public Health Nursing (NOPHN). This organization developed standards for care and functioned for 40 years. As with many organizations, there is an origin and an ending. June 15-20, 1952, marked the last joint meeting between the ANA, NLNE, and NOPHN. A vote for dissolution was called during this meeting and on June 17, 1952, the NOPHN was formally dissolved and subsumed into the NLNE (https://findingaids.library.upenn.edu/records/UPENN_BATES_PU-N.MC83). ■

*Until next time,
Trudy*



Jessie Sleet Scales

<https://www.mappingcare.digital.uic.edu/page/media/jessie-sleet-scales>



Dorothea Lynde Dix

https://civilwar.si.edu/leaders_dix.html