

Alice Merritt Robinson papers

MC 29

Finding aid prepared by Center staff, updated by Bethany Myers.

Last updated on February 11, 2014.

University of Pennsylvania, Barbara Bates Center for the Study of The History of Nursing

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Barbara Bates Center for the Study of The History of Nursing
Creator	Robinson, Alice Merritt, 1920-1983
Title	Alice Merritt Robinson papers
Call number	MC 29
Date [inclusive]	1920-1983
Extent	8 linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	The strength of this collection lies in the materials which relate to the professional training of nurses and nursing education issues, particularly with regard to psychiatric nursing. Robinson's work as a nursing instructor, administrator, and author are well documented by her speeches, annotated manuscripts for publication, personal and professional writings, employment files, and photographs. The collection also contains several journal issues and reprints of Robinson's writings.

Cite as:

Alice Merritt Robinson papers, Barbara Bates Center for The Study of The History of Nursing,
University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Alice Merritt Robinson (1921-1983) was born in Sayville, New York in 1921. Inspired by World War II to become a nurse, she attended the Duke University School of Nursing. From 1944 to 1948 she served as an army nurse, during which time she became interested in psychiatric nursing. In 1947, Robinson returned to school to obtain her master's degree from the Boston University School of Nursing. She worked as a psychiatric nurse and clinical instructor at the Boston State Hospital, 1950-1955; at the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas, 1955-1956; and at the Vermont State Hospital, Waterbury, Vermont, 1956-1962. In 1962 she left hospital nursing to become one of the associate editors of *Nursing Outlook*. She became the senior editor of *Nursing Outlook* in 1968 and resigned in 1970 when she felt that she was not getting enough support from her supervisor. Apparently there were some bad feelings in this parting. A minor controversy arose when Robinson gave her employer four months notice. She was instructed to clear out her desk immediately in a letter that implied she had been dismissed. During the years 1958 to 1970 she also served as a consultant to various Veteran's Administration hospitals. From 1971-1975 she was the senior editor of *RN Magazine*. Through out her career Robinson was a sought after speaker. She gave speeches at graduations, to public organizations, and led workshops. In 1975 Robinson decided to venture into self employment by starting her own business called Specialized Consultants in Nursing (SCIN). The basis of the business was to provide workshops for nurses and people in the health profession as a means of continuing education. SCIN workshops covered such topics as Hypertension Control, Infection Control, and Clinical and Professional Writing as well as others. Other nurses and professionals were employed to help her with the workshops. The workshops were either sponsored by pharmaceutical companies or nursing organizations, or they were paid for by the participants. Robinson continued to run this business until her death in 1983. Robinson was involved in several nursing organizations including the American Nurses Association (ANA) and the National League for Nurses (NLN). She was in charge of the 1956 NLN Midwestern Conference held at Topeka, Kansas. The Vermont League of Nurses elected Robinson its president in 1959. She was involved in a number of projects for both the ANA and the NLN and she supported student nurses' associations. Throughout her life Robinson was very interested in writing. She had even considered pursuing a degree in English but decided to become a nurse instead. She did, however, write several articles and books during her career. Probably her best known work was a text entitled *The Psychiatric Aide* which ran for four editions. She wrote a number of other text books and many articles about various aspects of nursing practice. Robinson not only generated professional literature but she wrote fiction also such as the novel *The Unbelonging*, published in 1958. Author of several other unpublished fiction stories, Robinson's nonfiction work was better received.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Barbara Bates Center for the Study of The History of Nursing

Finding aid prepared by Center staff, updated by Bethany Myers.

Access Restrictions

This collection is unrestricted.

Use Restrictions

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Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Gift of Mary Ann Tuft, 1989.

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Vermont League of Nurses.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Personal papers

OCCUPATION(S)

- Nurse
- Periodical editors.

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Robinson, Alice Merritt, 1920-1983
- Tuft, Mary Ann

SUBJECT(S)

- Military nursing
- Psychiatric nursing

Collection Inventory

SERIES 1. PERSONAL, 1921-1983.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains correspondence, newspaper clippings, and a scrapbook which pertain to Robinson's family and her personal life. Materials are arranged chronologically.

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Scope and Contents note

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What are the Social Science Concepts which Offer Help to the Nurse Working with Groups of Patients by J. E. Wiechers, March 1, 1956.	14	299
What Changes in Nursing Administration Should be Considered so that Better Nursing Would Result? by M. L. Jones, March 1, 1956.	14	300
What Kind of Experiences should be provided to Prepare the Nurse to Work with Large Groups of Patients? by G. R. Fowler, March 3, 1956.	14	301
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Report on the conference, April 10, 1956.	14	302
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Description of the NLN booklet Suggestions for Experimentation in	14	303

the Education of Psychiatric Aides, 1959.

Key points of the Calder proposals, circa 1960. 14 304

Introductory remarks to the Constituent Leagues, 1968. 15 305

Preparing the foundation proposal, 1970. 15 306

VERMONT LEAGUE OF NURSING, 1957-1960.

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Summary of the Action for Mental Health, The final report of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health, 1961.	15	315
Conference on continuing education in nursing, attendance confirmation slips, 1980.	15	316
Conference group on psychiatric nursing practice appendix A and list of officers.	15	317

EAST HARLEM NURSING COUNCIL, 1969-1970.

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NURSE HOUSE INCORPORATED, 1982.

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Annual meeting minutes, 1982.	15	323
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OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, 1952-1980.

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Panel discussion on "Fragmentation of Therapy", January 2, 1952.	15	326
MSNA panel "Plans for Managerial Assistant to the Head Nurse", January 1954.	15	327
Report on the Vermont State Hospital programs of Nursing Education, 1958.	15	328
Outline of a presentation for INSA meeting at the Bristol Inn, 1960.	15	329
Information on World Federation for Mental Health 16th Annual meeting, 1963.	15	330
New England Board of Higher Education Regional Nursing Education Program, 1965.	15	331
ASAE Association National Leadership Conference, program and notes, 1980.	15	332

SERIES 3. PHOTOGRAPHS, 1900-1982.

Scope and Contents note

Contained here are photographs of Robinson, her family, and friends at work and at play. The photographs are arranged chronologically. Two photo albums are also included.

PERSONAL PHOTOGRAPHS, 1900-1982.

	Flatbox	Folder
Family photographs, 1900-1939.	16	1
Robinson and friends, 1940-1982.	16	2
Robinson and friends, undated.	16	3
Scenic photographs, 1950-1960.	16	4

PHOTOGRAPHS RELATED TO ROBINSON'S EMPLOYMENT, 1950-1982.

	Flatbox	Folder
Portraits of Robinson, 1950-1970.	17	5
Robinson at work, 1940-1982.	17	6
Robinson's farewell dinner from Boston State, 1956.	17	7
Publicity shots for Nursing Outlook, 1967.	17	8
Robinson at work dates unknown.	17	9
Photographs sent to Lippincott.	17	10
Photograph used in the book by Robinson, Your Future in Nursing Careers.	17	11
Photographs that accompanied the paper on hyperbaric oxygenation.	17	12

SLIDES.

	Folder
Slides of cartoons used to accompany lectures.	13
Slides from Robinson's party.	14
Negatives not matched to photographs.	15
	Folder
Family Photo album, 1925-1936.	18
Photo album of Robinson's vacation, 1945.	18

SERIES 4. DIPLOMAS, 1944-1948.

Scope and Contents note

Robinson's diplomas from Duke University for nursing and her BS in Nursing Education from Catholic University make up this series.

	Flatbox	Folder
Diploma from Duke University School of Nursing, 1944.	19	1
	Flatbox	Folder
Bachelor of Science in Nursing Education from Catholic University, 1948.	2	

SERIES 5. PUBLICATIONS, 1949-1982.

Scope and Contents note

The series is comprised of reprints of articles written by Robinson, journals and magazines collected by Robinson, and books written by her. This series is arranged chronologically for individual works and alphabetically for the publications.

ARTICLES BY ROBINSON, 1949-1975.

	Box	Folder
Praise, Blame, And Gossip in Progress in Nursing Service, 1949.	20	1
Series on "Research in Psychiatric Nursing" in The American Journal of Nursing, 1955.	20	2
The Conference Group on Psychiatric Nursing Practice in The American Journal of Nursing, 1959.	20	3
Communicating with Schizophrenic Patients in The American Journal of Nursing, August, 1960.	20	4
Editorials for Nursing Outlook, 1964.	20	5
Series "Keys to Understanding The Patient" in Journal of Practical Nursing, March/ April 1971.	20	6
Birth Control through Sterilization in The Australian Nurses Journal, August 1973.	20	7
Problem Oriented Record: Uniting the Team for Total Care in RN, June 1975.	20	8
Nurse-epidemiologist: Key to Infection Control in RN, October 1975.	20	9
	Box	Folder
Remotivation Technique Manual by Robinson, 1972.	20	10

ARTICLES BY OTHER AUTHORS, 1944-1979.

	Box	Folder
Weekend with the Angels by E. B. White in The New Yorker, January 22, 1944.	20	11
A History of Psychiatric Nursing in the 19th Century by E. H. Santos and E. Stainbrook in Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Science, Winter 1949.	20	12
Prestige and Status of Nursing and Other Women's Occupations by R. M. Frumkin in Ohio Nurses Review, October 1955.	20	13
Series on Alcohol and Alcoholics by B. Rouchi from The New Yorker, January 1960.	20	14
"Team Nursing-1961" by E. A. Brooks in The American Journal of Nursing, April 1961.	20	15
"Nurses Participating in Group Therapy" by D. I. Brown in The American Journal of Nursing, January 1962.	20	16
"What does a Psychiatric Nurse Specialist Do?" by M. J. Croley in The American Journal of Nursing, February 1962.	20	17
"Let's be Realistic about Psychiatric Aide Education" by R. M. Vaughn in The American Journal Of Nursing, April 1962.	20	18
"The Tragedy of the Report of the Surgeon General's Consultant Group on Nursing" by R. V Matheney in Nursing Science, April 1963.	20	19
RN News in RN, September 1975.	20	20
Project Analysis and Planning for Improved Distribution of Nursing Personnel and Services, project update, January 1976.	20	21

Piloting the Podium by P. Hammer in A & SM, August/September 1976.	20	22
New Grads win Solo Battle: Licensing Exams Ruled Valid in RN, December 1979.	20	23
The Ancestry of Thomas Halsey, 1189-1591 by E. L. Potter, undated.	20	24
	Box	Folder
Catalogue of books published by MacMillan, 1959-1960.	20	25
Bound copy of papers presented at the Institute on Psychiatric Nursing Practice, sponsored by the ANA in Chicago, IL, March 17-18, 1960.	20	26
Survey for psychiatric aides, 1964.	20	27
Galley proofs for chapters 9 and. 10 of the Psychiatric Aide, undated.	20	28
Nursing Education in High Blood Pressure Control by the Task Force on the Use of Nursing in High Blood Pressure Control, 1975-1977.	20	29
PUBLICATIONS, 1952-1983.		
	Box	Folder
The American Journal of Nursing, 1963 and 1983.	20	30
Brief Bulletin about Boston University, 1959.	20	31
The Bulletin, April, August/September 1975.	20	32
Imprint: National Student Nurse Association, 1975-1983.	21	33
The Journal of Practical Nursing, April-August, 1971.	21	34
The Kansas Nurse, December 1955.	21	35

Mental Hospitals, January 1963.	21	36
National Student Nurses Association Newsletter, 1981-1983.	21	37
Nurse Educator, July/August 1976.	21	38
Nursing and Health Care, 1981 and 1983.	21	39
Nurse House Incorporated Newsletter, 1981-1983.	21	40
Nursing Outlook, 1964-1968.	21	41
Nursing Outlook, 1969-1970.	22	42
Nursing Research, June 1952.	22	43
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The Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, May/June 1976.	22	45
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Perspectives in Psychiatric Care, 1982-1983.	22	47
Project Tomorrow, 1975.	22	48
RN, May, 1958.	22	49
RN, 1971-1975.	22	50
RN Recruiter, March/April 1975.	22	51
Staff, Winter 1965.	22	52
Supervisor Nurse, May 1976.	22	53
Writer's Digest, September 1970.	22	54

BOOKS BY ROBINSON.

	Box
Coauthored with L. E. Notter Clinical Writing for Health Care Professionals, Robert J. Brady Co. Bowie, MD, 1982.	23
The Psychiatric Aide. His Part in Patient Care, J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1954.	23
The Psychiatric Aide, 3rd edition, J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1964.	23
The Unbelonging, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1958.	23
Working with the Mentally Ill, 4th edition, (formerly title The Psychiatric Aide) J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1971.	23
Coauthored with M. Reres, Your Future in Nursing Careers, Richards :Rosen Press Inc., New York, 1972.	23
Coauthored with M. Reres, Your Future in Nursing Careers, Arco, New York, 1977.	23
