Dorothy A. Mereness papers

MC 55

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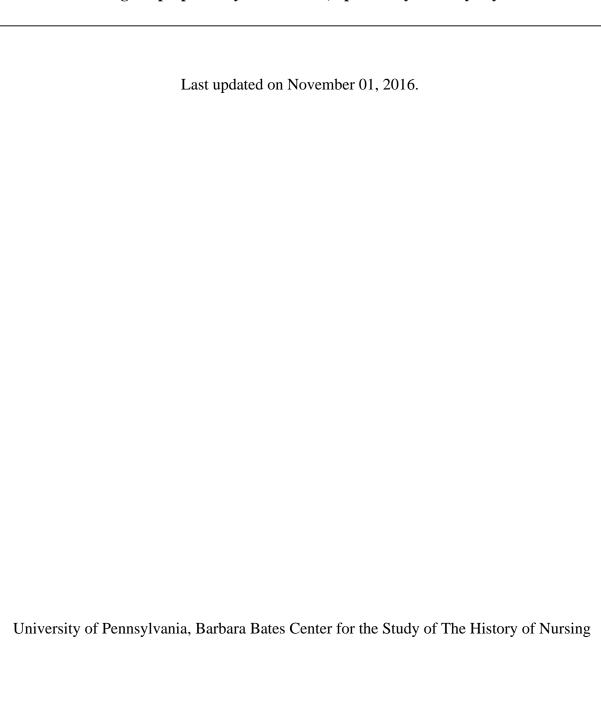


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Summary Information

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Creator Mereness, Dorothy Ann, 1910-1991

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Abstract Dorothy Ann Mereness, R.N., Ed.D., F.A.A.N., was Dean of the School of

Nursing, University of Pennsylvania from 1965 to 1977 and a pioneer in

the development of psychiatric nursing. This collection consists of personal papers and institutional files. The personal papers document Mereness's professional development. Although largely incomplete, the organizational files show the extent of Mereness's involvement in the

development of nursing at both regional and national levels.

Cite as:

Dorothy A. Mereness papers, Barbara Bates Center for The Study of The History of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Dorothy Ann Mereness, R.N., Ed.D., F.A.A.N., was Dean of the School of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania from 1965 to 1977 and a pioneer in the development of psychiatric nursing. Born 1910 in Kearney, Missouri, Mereness started her career as an elementary school teacher in Las Animas, Colorado. However, in 1938 with "parental scorn", as Mereness later recalled, she resigned her position as sixth grade teacher to become a nurse, a profession that her father had earlier forbidden her to enter, and enrolled at the Frances Payne School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University. Only after two years at Case Western Reserve did Mereness's interest in psychiatric nurse develop. During the summer of 1940 she took psychiatric and communicable disease nursing. This class was among the first to use the textbook Psychiatry for Nurses by Dr. Louis L. Karnosh, a professor at Case Western Reserve and Director of the Psychiatric Division of Cleveland Hospital. Karnosh's work fascinated Mereness. She often traveled across town by public transportation to hear Karnosh's lectures, and she eventually became co-author and finally sole author of Karnosh's book. Even after Mereness stopped authoring the popular textbook, now in its thirteenth edition, the publishers kept her name as part of the title.

After graduating from Case Western Reserve in 1941, Mereness became Instructor of Psychiatric Nursing at City Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, a position that she accepted only after learning that Dr. Karnosh had recommended her. However, Mereness stayed at City Hospital for four years. The War Department listed her position as "essential," since few medical personnel were qualified to treat soldiers suffering from the traumas of war. When the war ended, Mereness left Cleveland City Hospital to explore other professional opportunities. After a brief stay as Educational Director of a hospital-based nursing program, Mereness returned to psychiatric nursing, a specialty that she held to for the rest of her career. Mereness enrolled in the graduate psychiatric nursing program at the University of Pittsburgh,

and became part of the faculty upon graduation. Later an innovative approach to psychiatric care at the Massachusetts Health Center, which involved nurse/patient therapeutic interactions, aroused her interest and on that account Mereness accepted a position at Boston University.

However, after only a year in Boston, Mereness left to pursue her doctoral studies at Teacher's College, Columbia University. During this period, Mereness co-wrote the graduate psychiatric nursing curriculum for New York University. Before even finishing her dissertation, Mereness became Head of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing at NYU. After ten years at the University, Mereness moved south to Philadelphia to be the Dean of the School of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania.

Throughout her career, Mereness devoted herself to the full development of her chosen profession. From 1965-1969, she hired four black faculty members at Penn, a bold and imaginative action given the circumstances of the times. Mereness also strongly believed that it was essential to participate in nursing organizations. Even while serving as Dean, she chaired numerous committees of various nursing organizations including the National League for Nursing and Nurses' Educational Funds. After her retirement in 1977, Mereness continued her amazing volume of work. She served as Emeritus Professor at Penn until 1979, taught for a year part-time at Villanova University, and was Educational Advisor for the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing from 1981 to 1984. From March 1984 until just a year and a half before her death, Mereness served as Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Nurses' Association. Mereness published more than 45 articles and books between 1951 and 1991. Her last article was published posthumously in Nursing Outlook. She was the recipient of many awards including

distinguished alumni awards from every nursing program that she attended and honorary doctorate from Villanova and Holy Family College in Philadelphia. She was also honored by the American Nurses' Association, the Pennsylvania League for Nursing, and the Southeastern Pennsylvania League for Nursing. Mereness died at 80 at Chestnut Hill Hospital in Philadelphia after a brief illness during the Spring of 1991.

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.

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CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Columbia University. Teachers College.
- University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Faculty papers Personal papers

OCCUPATION(S)

- Nurse
- Nursing schools--Faculty

PERSONAL NAME(S)

• Mereness, Dorothy Ann, 1910-1991

SUBJECT(S)

• Psychiatric nursing

Collection Inventory

SERIES 1. PERSONAL, 1910-1991.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains Mereness's personal papers. It includes biographical information such as autobiographical writings, biographical sketches, resumes, obituary materials and newspaper clippings. Also included are Mereness's speeches and papers--mainly on the topics of the therapeutic role of nurses and nursing education--commencement addresses, awards, correspondence and programs in which she participated.

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Scope and Contents note

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Perhaps the most important item in this section is a rewritten history of the School of Nursing prepared by Mereness. The rest of the School of Nursing's file includes a few annual reports, programs, correspondence and publications. The remaining organizations are arranged alphabetically with state and local chapters as well as committees attached as subseries to the parent institutions. Thus, Pennsylvania League for Nursing (PLN) is arranged as subseries to the National League for Nursing, the Southeastern PLN is created as a subseries of PLN, and the PLN Steering Committee for Education in Psychiatry, a committee to study psychiatric nursing education, is also a subseries of PLN.

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Scope and Contents note

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|------|
| Mereness receiving an Honorary Membership into the American Academy of Nursing, 1984. | 8 | 27.1 |
| Mereness greeting guess at a dinner celebrating her Honorary membership into the American Academy of Nursing, 1984. | 8 | 28 |
| Mereness with colleague at fiftieth anniversary dinner, School of Nursing, University of Pittsburgh, Spring 1990. | 8 | 29 |

OTHER GROUP PICTURES.

| | Box | Photo | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------|--|
| Head nurses at City Hospital, Cleveland, Ohio, and Mereness, who taught psychiatric nursing, 1942. | 8 | 30 | |
| Head nurses at City Hospital, Cleveland, Ohio, and Mereness, who taught psychiatric nursing, 1942. | 8 | 30.1 | |
| Mereness surrounded by New York University students, 1964. | 8 | 31 | |
| Mereness sitting at table with School of Allied Medical Profession administrators, May 1970. | 8 | 32 | |
| Past officers of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, October 1976. | 8 | 33 | |
| Mereness with members of the Class of 1941, Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve, fortieth anniversary reunion, 1981. | 8 | 34 | |
| Mereness at the dinner party in honor of her 80th birthday, 1990. | 8 | 34.a-c | |
| | | | |

PICTURES OF MERENESS'S COLLEAGUES.

| | Box | Photo | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|--|
| Lira Eldridge, Boulder, Colorado, August 1978. | 8 | 35 | |
| Elinor Hule in front of closed garage on snowy day, Christmas 1989. | 8 | 36 | |
| Hildegard E. Peplau, 1930. | 8 | 37 | |
| Hildegard E. Peplau and grand nephew, David Erich Garden, 1982, 1984, 1989. | 8 | 38 | |
| Miriam Stuzman Schibler, December 1989. | 8 | 30 | |
| Dr. Margretta Styles, former President of the American Nurses' Association 1986-1988, and former Dean, School of Nursing, University of California at San Francisco. | 8 | 40 | |
| Miscellaneous photographs, 1960-1984. | 8 | 1 | |
| Negatives, 1945-1976. | 8 | 2 | |

SERIES 4. BOOKS, TAPES, AND ARTIFACTS, 1935-1989.

Box 8

Scope and Contents note

This series contains collected books and cassette tapes and artifacts. The two books are Karnosh's A Psychiatrist's Anthology and Faddis's A School of Nursing Comes of Age. The two cassette tapes are the recordings of a speech by Gaylord P. Harnwell, former president of the University of Pennsylvania, and of a television advertisement for nursing. Among the artifacts are plaques and Mereness's Emeritus Professor medallion.

| | Box |
|--------|-----|
| BOOKS. | 9 |

| | Box |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Karnosh, Louis, M.D. A Psychiatrist's Anthology, 1935, presented as gift to Mereness, October, 1940; Faddis, Margene. A School of Nursing Comes of Age, 1973, signed copy from author to Mereness, 1973. | 9 |
| TAPES. | Box 9 Box |
| Ad for Nurses for television, 1981; Gaylord Harnwell, President of the University of Pennsylvania, addressing Council of Deans, 1965; Scotch recording tape from President of the University of Pennsylvania to Dean Mereness. | 9 |
| ARTIFACTS. | Box 9 Box |
| Four plaques; One Emeritus Member medallion from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing; Framed Certificate of Recognition, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 1976. | 9 |
| | |
| Unprocessed Accessions. | Box 10 |
| 1993.21. | |
| Correspondence, Interview, Speech outlines, Handwriten drafts, Notes. | |
| Chapter 5 handwritten script, interviews with June Maner, Theresa Lynch, Mary Bean Woodruff. | n and Miss |
| Draft 2 with Claire Fagine notes. | |

| | Typed drafts of academic reports and manuscripts. |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | General Info. |
| | Handwritten notes. |
| | Letters received after obituary. |
| | Mereness Book. |
| | Draft. |
| | |
| 2016.06. | |
| | 2 notebooks on meeting notes c. 1972. |
| | Christmas cards 1969-1972. |
| | Clippings. |
| | CV. |
| | Christmas greetings from Dorothy Mereness c. 1940-1980. |
| | Papers, speeches and misc. |
| | Brown Publishing Company correspondence and other materials related to book Essentials of Psychiatric Nursing c. 1970-1973. |