

Chautauqua School of Nursing Records

MC 22

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

Last updated on March 24, 2016.

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	Chautauqua School of Nursing.
Title	Chautauqua School of Nursing Records
Call number	MC 22
Date [inclusive]	1909-1912
Extent	1 linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	The Chautauqua School of Nursing was a nursing correspondence school in the early 20th century. This collection consists of lectures and printed pamphlets sent to Essie P. Rugg, who was a student circa 1912.

Cite as:

Chautauqua School of Nursing Records, Barbara Bates Center for The Study of The History of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

The Chautauqua Correspondence School of Nursing was founded in 1900 in Jamestown, NY. It grew rapidly as a result of a successful magazine advertising campaign, which touted the opportunity to make between \$10.00 and \$35.00 a week as a registered nurse upon graduation, and the fact that the school shared its name with the widely known and respected (yet entirely distinct) Chautauqua Institution. Over the course of its existence, the Chautauqua School of Nursing enrolled over 20,000 students, and in 1915, claimed to be the largest source of registered nurses in the country. Its closure in 1927 was largely due to opposition from those who favored organized nursing that had become institutionalized in the hospital training school.

At the time of the Chautauqua School of Nursing's inception, it was common practice for physicians to train their own nurses. However, physicians clearly preferred to fill such positions with individuals who already possessed some knowledge of both medicine and nursing. Because there were no regulations on either nurses education nor licensure, correspondence nursing schools like Chautauqua arose to provide lessons in theory and justification for nursing practice to individuals who wanted to be nurses but could not or preferred not to enroll in a traditional 2-3 year training school program. A brochure published by Chautauqua Nursing School in 1915 revealed that students enrolled there for a variety of reasons, including age, being married, or living in isolated areas that lacked training schools. In some cases, mothers enrolled simply because they believed it would help them care for their families, while "practical nurses" would enroll to bolster their credentials and become registered nurses. Like the conventional training schools of the time, Chautauqua with its own pin, caps, and certificates, making it very difficult for the public to distinguish them from nurses who had undergone a 2-3 year program at a hospital training school.

By and large, doctors and physicians regarded the training provided by these schools as a highly satisfactory alternative. Furthermore, most states recognized graduates of some correspondence schools as registered nurses. Chautauqua was one of the largest and most reputable correspondence schools. For an enrollment fee of \$75.00—a considerable amount at the time-- a student received a three-part nursing course, comprised of lectures and course material in general nursing, obstetrical, and surgical nursing. Tests were taken open-note, and the school paid postage for their submission. Some students augmented their coursework by working for physicians to gain clinical experience while completing their studies. If a student worked hard, they could earn their nursing certificate in 15 months. If, on the other hand, they found their training unsatisfactory, students could request a full refund, a measure which the school thought would boost enrollment and strengthen its integrity.

However, despite the schools apparent success, many members of the nursing and medical communities remained critically wary of Chautauqua and other correspondence schools, which they saw as farcical money-making schemes, and sought to disband them. The Chautauqua School attempted to affirm its legitimacy by regularly publishing brochures filled with testimonies from graduates that went on to become nurses. Furthermore, in 1913, Chautauqua commissioned a group of prominent physicians appointed by the New York Medical Journal to write a report evaluating the quality of its education and the performance of its graduates. Although both the graduate testimonies and findings of the report were resoundingly positive, they were not enough to stave off the attack of those who opposed the correspondence schools and demanded a more institutionalized and professional approach to nursing. The efforts to upgrade and standardize nursing education resulted in the school's closure in 1927.

Scope and Contents

The collection is made up mainly of printed pamphlets bound in a cloth-covered binder inscribed "The Chautauqua School of Nursing" and the logo: "I Will' Conquers While 'I May' Fails." Some of the publications contain black-and-white photographs and diagrams. The date listed below indicates date of copyright. The collection also includes miscellaneous memoranda by John M. Brooks, M.D., Principal, mimeographed on the school's letterhead stationery, and handwritten reading notes filed with the lecture pamphlets.

A printed book plate with the school logo and motto has been pasted on the inside front cover of the binder. The plate indicates: "These lectures are issued to Miss Essie P. Rugg who is enrolled as a Student in this Institution. The lectures are her property. She, however, agreeing to reserve them solely for her individual study."

According to the donor, Essie P. Rugg was a long-time resident of Leominster, Massachusetts. Ms. Rugg "bequeathed the manual to my paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Vosmus Steeves, who then bequeathed the manual to me because of my interest in medicine."

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

Copyright restrictions may apply. Please contact the Center with requests for copying and for authorization to publish, quote or reproduce the material.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Gift of Sharen Casazza.

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Chautauqua School of Nursing.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Lecture notes
- Manuals (instructional materials)

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Casazza, Sharen

SUBJECT(S)

- Correspondence schools and courses
- Nursing.

Collection Inventory

SERIES 1. BEDSIDE STORIES.

	Box
Obstetrical Experiences. My First Obstetrical Case, 1909.	2
Serious Obstetrical Cases: Nursing a Case of Septicemia Under Difficulties, 1909.	2
My First Surgical Case, 1909.	2
Nursing Serious Cases: An Appreciative Pleurisy Patient, 1909.	2
My First Case of Typhoid, 1910.	2
Respiratory Affections. Pure Air in Pneumonia, 1910.	2
Interesting Cases: My 1st Experience with Physicians, 1910.	2
Nursing Typhoid: Other Serious Cases, 1910.	2
Nursing Contagious Cases: Measles Complicated by Broncho-Pneumonia, 1910.	2
My First Case, 1910.	2
Critical Cases: Lobar Pneumonia, 1910.	2
Obstetrical Cases: Complications; An Emergent Operation, 1910.	2
Surgical Experiences. How I Succeeded in My First Surgical Case, 1910.	2
In Hospital and Sick-Room. The Wrong Bottle, 1912.	2

Many Experiences: My First Emergency Case, 1912.	2
Stories for the Surgical Nurse: 11 Weeks' Case of Empyema, 1912.	2

SERIES 2. LECTURES, 1909-1912.

DIETETICS AND INVALID FEEDING:.

	Box
Nutritious Desserts: Gelatin, Jellies...c. 1907 By Alida Frances Pattee, 1910.	2

OBSTETRICAL/SURGICAL NURSING:.

	Box
	2
	Box
Artificial Feeding, The Modification of Milk, 1911.	2
Devt of the New-born, Disorders of Early Infancy, 1911.	2
Medical Gynecology, Postures, Methods of Treatment, Diseases, 1911.	2
The Operating Room, Surgical Dressings, Preparation of Rm..., 1911.	2
Surgical Gynecology, Principal Operations/Instruments Used, 1911.	2

GENERAL SURGERY:.

	Box
Operations and Instruments, 1911.	2

OBSTETRICAL/SURGICAL NURSING:.

Box

Bandaging, Bandages and Their Application, 1911.

2

Accidents, Wounds, Fractures, Dislocations, Sprains, 1912.

2

Surgical Nursing, Post-Operative Care-Surgical Dressings, 1912.

2

Surgical Nursing, Post-Operative Care in Shock, Hemorrhage, 1912.

2

Hospital Nursing, Classification of Hospitals, 1912.

2

STUDIES IN GENERAL NURSING:.

Box

Questions & Problems, Questions/Problems of Nursing, 1912.

2

Box

DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTION:.

2

Box

How to Gain Experience, undated.

2

Directions for Study, undated.

2

OBSTETRICAL/SURGICAL NURSING:.

Box

The Female Pelvis, 1911.

2

Pregnancy, Its Symptoms, Hygiene, and Disorders, 1911.

2

Labor, Its Physiology & Mechanism, Approach, 1911.

2

Surg/Ob Disinfection, Bacteria, Wounds, Disinfectants...(Includes handwritten notes with printed lesson), 1911.	2
Labor,Its Management, The Duties of the Nurse (Includes handwritten notes with printed lesson), 1911.	2
Obstetrical Surgery, Obstetrical Operations-Anesthetization (Includes handwritten notes with printed lesson), 1911.	2
Obstet Convalescence, Care of Mother during Puerperium, 1911.	2
Disorders of Obstetrical Convalescence, 1911.	2
Care of the Newborn, Infant's Wardrobe, Hyg Reqs, Premature, 1911.	2

SERIES 3. OTHER.

	Box
Studies in Nursing, 1910.	2
Printed Student Lecture Notes.	1
Blank Enrollment Form, Quotes from Students, reprint of "How I Became A Nurse" (newsprint).	1
Book: <i>How I Became a Nurse</i> (2 copies), 1911.	2

	Box
Artifact: Chautauqua School of Nursing Nursing tool kit.	AR-2016