

## Short History of the Founding of the American Journal of Nursing.\*

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In the year 1896 the American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools for Nurses held their second Annual Convention in Boston, Mass.

Of the many informal discussions, between sessions, of timely topics by groups of members, that of the necessity for an organ to represent fully nursing movements and progress from nurses' view points, was insistently voiced, until it took firm hold of the inner consciousness of the women who eventually carried the scheme to its end.

Before the meeting of the third Annual Convention of Superintendents of Training Schools held in Philadelphia, Pa., 1897, steps were taken as a basis from which to intelligently discuss the situation if the subject should be brought forward in that meeting. Printers, publishers, and proprietors of magazines were interviewed, the field surveyed, the prospect canvassed, the probable cost estimated, and other items tending to confirm the feasibility of the scheme, and also the desirability of its early adoption and development.

At this meeting a Committee was appointed to organise the Nurses' National Associated Alumnae Society, and as the establishment of a Nurses' Journal was recognised as a movement of National significance the whole question was with most judicious foresight entirely abandoned by the Superintendents' Society, and left as one of the primary issues of this more representative body.

Accordingly, at the first Convention of the Nurses' National Alumnae Society, held in New York, 1898, a Committee on Periodicals was appointed: Mrs. Robb, the Misses Nutting, Palmer, and Harrington.

At the second Annual Convention held in New York, 1899, this Committee was rearranged, and some additions made. Mrs. Robb, the Misses Nutting, Palmer, Stevenson, Fulmer, and Davis. This Committee continued with but little change as an active managing body until the *American Journal of Nursing Company* was incorporated.

This Committee reported through Miss Stevenson, the Chairman, several ways by which a Journal could be started. Here, then, begins the history in brief of the establishment of the *American Journal of Nursing*, which

contains little of sentiment or romance, but resembles rather "the short and simple annals of the poor."

Hard work, invincible courage, enthusiastic faith in themselves, in the loyalty of the profession, and the urgent demand for an organ that would express the highest and best unbiassed by commercial considerations, overcame every obstacle, even the two most formidable: the comparative ignorance among the profession of methods journalistic, and the lack of funds available in the treasury of the Associated Alumnae with which to finance the undertaking.

No matter what plan was discussed, this lack of funds was a blank wall that militated against that liberty and independence that was felt to be indispensable.

In order to secure freedom of expression of opinion or criticism, or advocacy of plan or policy in nursing matters it became evident that the journal must be a something more than an adjunct. It must be independent, an entity unhampered in its expressions of truths, as seen and interpreted by nurses, by either fear, favour, or prejudice. To that end it must be owned, edited, and controlled by nurses.

But how to start a journal on this free and independent basis without some financial backing was the question? On a small scale it was Stanley finding Livingstone in Darkest Africa. It was not beyond the possibilities, however, so it could be done.

The only way was for individual nurses to form themselves into a stock company to establish and maintain a journal till such time as the Associated Alumnae could be financially able to assume the ownership. This method had been pointed out by business men as the most difficult and risky of all the proposed plans. It would involve a large outlay, say enough to finance the scheme for two years before the journal could be made to pay expenses, and it would be many more years before any reimbursement could be expected. The administration also of the affairs of a stock company was expensive and hazardous, but in view of the vital interests at stake it was the plan that appealed.

In January, 1900, the Committee and others met in New York City and agreed on this plan. In order to reduce the difficulty of administration and the expense to a minimum it was agreed that the business should be carried on fraternally, each giving her work without remuneration, and only the profession allowed to invest in shares.

It has always been a matter for congratulation that among these pioneers were women of

\* Presented at the International Conference on Nursing at Paris, June, 1907.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)