

PICTURING
NURSING
AS A
CAREER



IDEAS ABOUT WOMEN, health care, and healing in western cultures have religious and cultural origins reaching back to ancient times. Nursing as a profession began about 150 years ago led by social reformers, like Florence Nightingale, in the United Kingdom and United States.

Hygeia "The First Nurse," 1933
Hygeia, the Greek goddess of health, is often thought of as the first nurse. Daughter of Asclepius, the god of medicine, Hygeia was in charge of cleanliness and preventative medicine in the religious cultures of the ancient Mediterranean world.
Produced by Ring Sanatorium and Hospital Inc., Arlington Heights, MA

Promotional postcard commemorating Florence Nightingale shortly after her death, ca. 1910
Florence Nightingale's nightly care of the wounded during the Crimean War (1853-1856) led to her epithet "the Lady with the Lamp." Afterwards, Nightingale established the first modern school of nursing at St. Thomas's Hospital in London.
Produced by Reckitt and Sons Ltd., Hull, United Kingdom

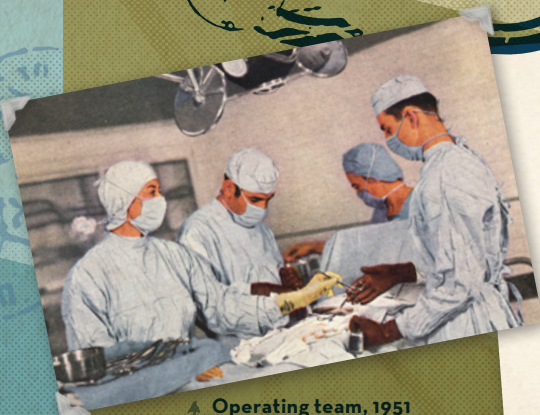


The Real Angel of Mons, ca. 1915
Produced by Inter-Art Co., London



Trained nurses administer the Finsen Light Treatment at the London Hospital, ca. 1900
A career in nursing offered new opportunities for women such as economic independence and freedom from constricting domestic lives.

PICTURING
NURSING
TODAY



Operating team, 1951
Produced by US Army Nurse Corps



Armed Intervention. I like your cheek!, United States, 1917



Add a black eye to whatever he's already got!, England, 1950s
This card uses two common British nurse stereotypes, the older 'battle-axe,' a frustrated spinster and strict disciplinarian, and the young 'sexy' nurse, to create comic affect. Sexy nurses were frequently shown as worldly wise, working class blonde women, who were 'fair game' for their male patients' unwanted advances.
Produced by H. B. Ltd., England

POST CARD
POPULAR ART during the 19th century favored a sentimental use of nursing archetypes such as the "angel" or "mother." As the 20th century progressed, advertising images of nurses frequently featured increasingly saucy, sexualized representations of women. Since the 1980s, nurses have become far more aware of their public image and they are keen to update the archetypes that have dominated in the past.



The National Library of Medicine developed and produced this exhibition.
Guest curated by Julia Hallam, PhD.
Exhibition design by The Design Minds.
www.nlm.nih.gov/picturesofnursing



THE ZWERDLING POSTCARD COLLECTION
PICTURES OF NURSING



Rural visiting nurse Elizabeth McPhee, Scotland, 1926

Anti-Tuberculosis Campaign, G. Saccomani, Anti-Tuberculosis Consortium of the Province of Udine, Italy, ca. 1935

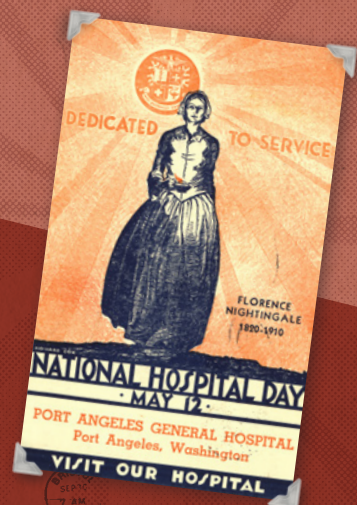


U.S. National Library of Medicine

THE POSTCARD is a fleeting art form influenced by popular ideas and fashions in visual style. Nurses and nursing have been frequent subjects for over one hundred years. In fact, no other art form has illustrated the nursing profession so profusely and in such variety.

These images of nurses and nursing are informed by cultural values; ideas about women, men, and work; and by attitudes toward class, race, and national differences.

Pictures of Nursing investigates the hold these images exert on the public imagination—then and now.



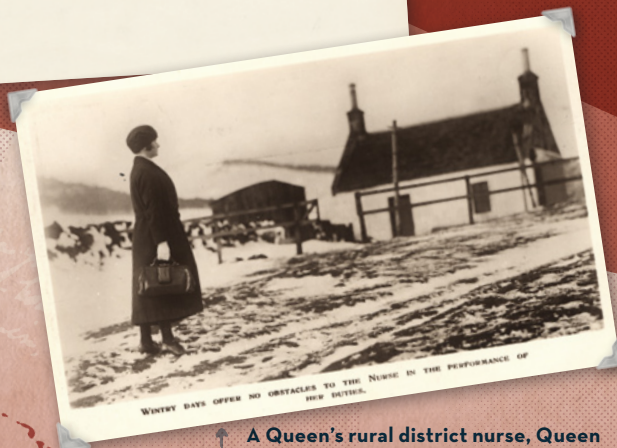
Dedicated to Service, Howard Cox, Port Angeles General Hospital, Port Angeles, WA, 1937



Reproduction of Army Nurse Corps recruitment poster for WWII, Henry McAlear, Dover Publications Inc., United States, 2001

THE ZWERDLING COLLECTION

The History of Medicine Division Zwerdling Postcard Collection is a unique archive of 2,588 postcards featuring images of nurses and the nursing profession from around the world produced between 1893 and 2011.



A Queen's rural district nurse, Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, Scotland, ca. 1927

PICTURING THE GENDER OF NURSING

FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, men have undertaken aspects of nursing work often in all-male institutions such as religious organizations and the military. Yet, their contributions are largely invisible.

Children learned that nursing is women's work through games, toys, and stories. Girls were brought up to be nurses, while boys were raised to be soldiers and doctors.



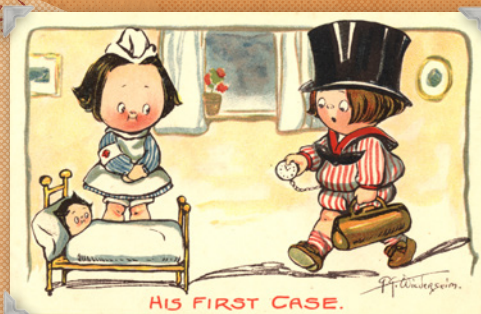
Group of male nurses of Dixmont Hospital, PA, ca. 1910
Created by D. W. Short Produced by Herbert E. Sloan Publishing, PA



St. Luke's Hospital Doctor and Nurses, Fergus Falls, MN, 1911
An early nursing training manual by Clara S. Weeks-Shaw in 1900 instructs, "The first duty is that of obedience—absolute fidelity to [the doctor's] orders..."
Created by Walter T. Oxley (1872-1955)
Produced by St. Luke's Hospital

His First Case, ca. 1910
American illustrator Grace Wiederseim is best remembered for creating the Campbell Kids advertising campaign during the early 1900s. This cartoon, of a boy doctor attending to a sick doll while a girl nurse looks on, is typical of Wiederseim's style at the time.

Created by Grace G. Wiederseim (1877-1936) Produced by Alfred Schweizer Fine Art Publisher



Little Patriots, United States, ca. 1917



PICTURING NURSING AND RESPECTABILITY



Nurses from the George A. Brewster Nurse Training School pose for a group portrait, Jacksonville, FL, ca. 1908
The legacy of slavery in the United States kept apart African American nurses from their White counterparts; nurses trained in separate schools and worked in segregated hospitals. The George A. Brewster Hospital opened in 1901 to treat African American victims of the Great Fire of Jacksonville, which left ten thousand people homeless.

St. Lucy's mission hospital in Kaffraria, South Africa, ca. 1910
Produced by Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, United Kingdom



CARTE POSTALE
Se renseigner à la poste sur la taxe pour les paquets

SOCIAL REFORMERS in the mid to latter half of the 19th century believed that White, middle-class respectability should form the basis of the "ideal" nurse.

In countries where missionary women worked as teachers and nurses, these hierarchies of class and race became entrenched. For people from the area, segregation and second-class status were consequences of this ordering of human worth and value.

The Great White Army, Italy, ca. 1915

