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Fashioning the future: the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps, 1943-1948

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FASHIONING THE FUTURE: THE U.S. CADET NURSE CORPS, 1943-1948

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of History

By
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ABSTRACT

The United States Cadet Nurse Corps, a student-nurse recruitment program administered by the United States Public Health Service, provided federal funding for nursing education during World War II. The subject of nursing on the American home front has largely been ignored, though nursing scholarship has focused, on occasion, on the more exciting battlefield experiences of the Army Nurse Corps. World War II launched a social revolution and set America on its path to a postwar consensus. Although a few historians have briefly mentioned the Corps' successful media recruitment campaign, its role in the social revolution remains unacknowledged.

This thesis examines the ways in which the Cadet Nurse Corps actively demonstrated and reinforced the social changes that took place in America during World War II. The Cadet Nurse Corps legislation of 1943 appeared safe and conventional, even offering a no-nonsense title, but proved to be a progressive and visionary student-nurse program. A safe product, the American nurse, was funded by a program with a radical premise. The Corps promoted equal rights for racial minorities, the professionalization of the nursing career, and the opportunity for women to work outside of the home. The Cadet Nurse Corps provided women with greater educational, financial, professional, and social benefits for a lifetime career. The Cadet Nurse Corps promoted social change by using a "traditional" profession to create a vision of what was appropriate for women.

INTRODUCTION

A 1944 radio spot announcement asked young women across America, “Do you want to be a girl with a future?” The United States Cadet Nurse Corps eagerly focused on the future to recruit student nurses by promoting practices to usher in social changes brought about by World War II, placing America on its path to postwar consensus. Providing federal funding for the training of nurses seemed like an ordinary but necessary measure to pass during wartime to provide enough nurses. On the surface, the Cadet Nurse Corps appeared to be a harmless and traditional program, but by using a safe product, the student nurse program was able to promote visionary changes as to the place of women in postwar America.

Historians argue that World War II launched a social revolution. New groups benefited from government appropriations, social and economic barriers were reduced, the modern civil rights movement began, and access to higher education became more democratic. Although scholars have termed the Corps’ media recruitment campaign the most successful of the war, they have failed to recognize and place the program in its social context. The legislation and benefits of the Corps reinforced the reality of support for the social changes brought about by the war. The Cadet Nurse Corps literally embodied this social revolution in home-front America during World War II.

When arguing for social change and revolution, it is doubtful that one first thinks of nurses. Yet the failure to recognize the program’s social innovations speaks to the power with which it was able to successfully implement progressive social transformations without antagonizing conservative southern Democratic congressmen, or tradition-minded men and women everywhere. It was not a strident demand for greater equality, but legislation for equality

driven by wartime demand. The Corps was able to foster social change within a traditional profession which made the program's radical premise less threatening.

The first chapter will explain the Cadet Nurse Corps' legislation and the benefits it provided young women, as well as the nursing shortage which led to the program's passage. The second chapter focuses specifically on the Corps' public patron, Representative Frances Payne Bolton, who advocated for the nursing profession as a young adult and continued to do so throughout her career as a Congresswoman. Her enthusiasm for social change can be seen not only in her legislative initiatives, but also in her personal advocacy. She was a consistent supporter of civil rights for racial minorities and worked to bring greater equality to women serving in the Armed Forces.

Chapter Three focuses on the media recruitment campaign which the Corps utilized in order to fill its large recruitment quotas. The Office of War Information, along with the War Advertising Council, produced posters, pamphlets, advertisements, government short films, and Hollywood feature films to aid in recruitment. The recruitment campaign was meant to challenge the traditional image of the nurse and to capitalize on the Corps' fashionable uniform in order to make the nursing profession more appealing.

The fourth chapter explains the Corps' promotion of civil rights in both its legislation and nursing practices. While the Corps can be seen as a part of the larger civil rights movement for African-Americans, this thesis will also focus on other marginalized minority groups, including Japanese Americans. The final chapter traces the social changes the Corps supported in the lives of women and their careers. Women had greater access to higher education, high salaries offered the opportunity for economic independence, married women were encouraged to work outside of the home, and the career of nursing was further professionalized.

The United States Cadet Nurse Corps' social innovations were substantial. The program was necessary during wartime, yet it proved to be a progressive program that anticipated postwar social changes. For young women across the nation, "a future" with the Corps meant educational opportunity, a professional career, and financial independence, yet still included the opportunity for society's traditional expectations of marriage and motherhood. These opportunities would become a precedent for women's opportunities as America entered the postwar period.

CHAPTER ONE: THE WARTIME SUPPLY CRISIS

The wartime needs of the nursing profession could not be solved using traditional peacetime programs or tactics. Solutions to expanding nursing education and the available nursing workforce called for new and innovative programs to meet the demands of the mounting nursing crisis in the early 1940s. As high salaries continued to draw women into defense industries, nursing leaders called for federal appropriations that could compete with others vying for womanpower. The creation of the United States Cadet Nurse Corps was designed to meet the wartime demands of the nursing profession by providing young women with federal financial aid for a nursing education, including living expenses. The Corps proved to be a program that supported an essential, non-controversial profession for women.

Before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, government agencies, hospital administrations, and nursing organizations recognized the need to expand America's nursing force. Nurses generally found ample opportunities throughout the 1930s, as the country slowly recovered from the Depression; increases in hospital use made their services more necessary. The expansion of hospital and medical insurance programs, as well as developing governmental plans such as social security and public health programs, provided thousands of nurses with steady job opportunities. Nursing leaders quickly recognized the necessity of expanding nursing education to provide an adequate nursing work force. As America entered World War II, the need for nurses and student nurses suddenly became acute.¹

By the early 1940s, civilian hospitals throughout the country were filled to capacity. As financial security and prosperity gradually returned, more patients entered hospitals and clinics

¹ United States Federal Security Agency, *The United States Cadet Nurse Corps [1943-1948] and other Federal Nurse Training Programs*, (PHS Publication No. 38), Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950, 4.

for medical treatments than ever before; new insurance plans provided affordable hospitalization for as little as three cents per day. In 1941 one million more patients sought hospital care than in 1940; by 1942 patients increased by another million.² One reason for the increase in patients seeking medical care can be attributed to the increase of births. The U.S. Census Bureau claimed 1942 as the year of the greatest record of births in the country's history with 3,020,000 births, or 20.9 births for every thousand persons. Eighteen percent more births were recorded during the first three months of 1943 than in the corresponding months of 1942. As hospitalization increased and the number of births rose steadily, the increase in hospital care for mothers and children continued to strain a growing nursing shortage.³

Given the nursing shortage, civilian hospital care deteriorated markedly. Forced to carry the maximum number of patients, hospitals often had to provide less-than-optimal service. Nurses were not only needed to staff hospital wards, but experienced teachers, supervisors, and head nurses were required by hospitals and schools of nursing to ensure that patient care ran smoothly. As government and nurse leaders sought solutions, the nursing shortage became so severe that some sections of hospitals stopped accepting patients, at least temporarily. Hospitals in Detroit, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Rochester, and Washington, DC, closed sections of their hospitals because of their inability to staff certain wards properly.⁴

Hospitals, however, were not the only places in need of nurses. As the nation prepared for possible war, the rise of defense industries and the industrial boom that followed required large numbers of nurses. In 1942 alone, the defense industry employed about 12,000 nurses--

² "Information Program for the United States Cadet Nurse Corps", Cont 9, Folder 138, Frances Payne Bolton Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, OH. [hereafter Bolton MSS].

³ *Ibid.*, "Why The 'Bolton Bill' Is Necessary," Con 9, Folder 137, Bolton MSS.

⁴ Frances Payne Bolton, "Immediate Release," March 29, 1943, Cont 9, Folder 137, Bolton MSS; United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps [1943-1948]*, 5.

more than double the number of nurses employed in industrial health work in 1941. In addition to providing essential nursing services for hospitals, clinics, defense areas, and communities, nurses' responsibilities also included teaching classes in home nursing, as well as giving volunteer information to citizens wanting to serve in case of a national emergency.⁵

Although hospitals, industries, and public health services across the nation demanded nurses, the unprecedented need for nurses continued to escalate rapidly once America entered the war. Military nursing drew nearly thirty percent of the active nurses from hospitals, clinics, schools, and institutions as the civilian demand for nurses increased. The American Red Cross Nursing Service recruited graduate nurses for the Army, Navy, and Naval Reserve. By April 1942 ten thousand nurses served in both the Army and Navy, and the military demanded 10,000 more before July. By 1943 the Army Nurse Corps alone issued a call for 35,000 nurses, while an estimated 17,000 positions in civilian hospitals were vacant, according to hospital authorities.⁶

In July 1940 representatives from various nursing organizations, including the American Nurses' Association and the National Organization for Public Health Nursing, as well as members from the nursing divisions of the armed forces, gathered to form the National Nursing Council for War Service, the first step toward coordination to solve a growing nursing shortage. The National Nursing Council for War Service summarized problems of the nursing profession and nursing education contributing to the nursing shortage. Although many civilians were aware of the demands for nurses, some continued to insist on special, luxury nursing services that

⁵ Thelma M. Robinson, *Your Country Needs You: Cadet Nurses of World War II* (Xlibris Corporation, 2009), 28.

⁶ Thelma M. Robinson and Paulie M. Perry, *Cadet Nurse Stories: The Call For and Response of Women during World War II* (Indianapolis: Center Nursing Publishing, 2001), 3; Beatrice and Philip Kalisch, "Nursing in American History: The Cadet Nurse Corps--in World War II," *American Journal of Nursing* 76, no. 2 (February 1976), 240; "Information Program", Bolton MSS; United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 10-11.

drained the pool of nurses available for practice. In 1941 the first national inventory of nurses was taken. It revealed that of the 289,286 registered nurses in the United States, only 173,055 were active in the profession and available for employment. No room existed for civilian luxury nursing with a small nursing workforce and wartime demands.⁷

Nearly forty percent of registered nurses no longer practiced. Many left for marriage or more profitable work, as recognized by the Surgeon General Thomas Parran, who noted the high disappearance rate from the nursing profession. Such a large number of available nurses had the potential to considerably alter the state of the nursing crisis, but re-entry into the profession could be difficult. For those whose nursing licenses had expired, recertification involved bureaucratic red tape; state boards of nurse examiners were loathe to modify standards. In order to solve the nursing shortage, changes had to be made, either to reinstating the license to practice, or providing proper educational courses to allow one to be reinstated into the profession as an active registered nurse.⁸

Another problem facing the nursing crisis was competition offered by industry. Industrial employment offered women higher salaries, and the increasing opportunities for better pay affected both nurses and potential student nurses. Many nurses left the profession for the opportunity to earn larger salaries in industrial plants, and the high employment rates and pay of industrial employment deterred young women from entering schools of nursing. It proved fruitless to urge young women to attend schools of nursing at their own expense when better employment opportunities and salaries existed elsewhere.

Military forces proved to be another challenge nursing leaders faced in solving the nursing shortage. The Army and Navy recruited nurses in anticipation of the war, and as the war

⁷ United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 5, 9-14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

progressed they continued to attract graduate nurses from civilian healthcare. It was widely reported that nurses often wrote home discouraging letters about the Army Nurse Corps which affected recruitment. In addition, professional nurses who entered the army lacked permanent status and until 1942 were not considered commissioned members of the armed forces. The plight for African-American nurses seeking to enter the military was worse—they were rarely admitted in the military on an equal basis, if at all.⁹ As wartime required more nurses in areas of defense, including industry and the military, it became essential to develop a plan to expand the nursing workforce on the home front.

Nursing leaders quickly became convinced that preparing the number of nurses needed for wartime demand could not follow traditional peacetime ways. Methods such as closing down selected wards of hospitals proved ineffective; solutions to the nursing crisis were needed right away. The government acknowledged the essential need to increase the recruitment of student nurses in order to ensure that a steady supply of graduate nurses remained in the workforce. Equally important was the effort to persuade professionally-inactive nurses to return to nursing service and to plan refresher courses to reinstate them. The training of voluntary nurses' aides handling select hospital duties under professional supervision also offered the promise of spreading the burden of patient care. Some nursing leaders suggested establishing government schools of nursing, but the more popular method for alleviating the nursing crisis included increasing the enrollment of existing school facilities, as well as providing an accelerated curriculum.¹⁰

In 1941 the Nursing Council presented a proposal to the United States Commissioner on Education, Dr. John Studebaker, to expand nursing education for national defense needs by

⁹ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4, 5-7.

providing financial aid to selected schools for basic training, refresher courses, and postgraduate nurse specialist training. An estimated 10,000 additional nurses were needed by 1941; the Nursing Council urged the government to appropriate funds for refresher training courses for inactive graduate nurses and for scholarships to be used for student nurse recruitment. As the demands for civilian and military nursing services continued to increase, nursing leaders continued to focus on a plan to secure federal funds to expand nursing education.¹¹

The Labor-Federal Security Agency Appropriation Act of 1942 was the first major governmental appropriation to help combat the nursing shortage. Administered by the Public Health Service, the original proposal's funding was cut to a modest \$1,200,000. The Act provided for three types of nurse training—refresher courses for inactive registered nurses, postgraduate education in specific fields for graduate nurses, and increased student enrollment in basic nursing schools. All 1,330 state-accredited schools of nursing were notified of the program and were eligible to apply for financial aid. Schools connected with hospitals with a daily average of more than 100 patients in four basic services were also eligible.

The federal funds had some stipulations. The funds were to be used to provide scholarship tuition for qualified applicants who could not afford tuition fees, to help expand the school's normal student enrollment, and to acquire and maintain additional instructors or instructional facilities. Funds could not be used for the construction of buildings or to provide cash allowances to students; however, appropriations could be used for dormitory space. Although the Act seemed like promising legislation, only about one-third of the schools of nursing across the country applying for subsidies received federal aid.¹²

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3, A-3, 8; Robinson, *Your Country Needs You*, 29.

¹² United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 9-14.

The number of nurses in training was increasing, but student nurse enrollment was still not high enough to meet the demand. Enrollment increased by about 3,000 students in 1941; by 1942 an estimated 47,500 student nurses enrolled in schools of nursing. Student nurse enrollment increased too slowly to sustain the civilian population at war. Nurses were essential, both overseas and at home. In order to maintain a nursing force to meet home front needs, nursing education needed more to draw young women into the profession.¹³

Scholarships clearly attracted young women with the promise of a free education. Student nurse enrollment needed to be increased by 10,000 for the fall of 1942 to bring total student nurse enrollment to 55,000, but as the war progressed and employment increased, so did the competition for womanpower. For nursing leaders, women needed greater incentive than the existing Labor-Federal Security Appropriations Act of 1942 to be drawn to the nursing profession. Professional nursing organizations argued that a new approach was needed for student nurse recruitment and emphasized that nurse training programs proved insufficient to meet both the demands of the armed forces and the civilian population. Expanding nursing education was a necessity.¹⁴

Federal aid appeared the only means of combating the growing nursing shortage. To ensure a steady flow from student nurses to graduate nurses and employment, schools needed to expand enrollment numbers, accelerate the educational curricula, and provide financial assistance for all students. Young women who considered nursing as a career often were instead attracted by the higher salaries in other sectors of war work; the nursing profession needed to meet the salaries of the competition. To bring the profession to the attention of young women who might never consider nursing as a career, the profession needed to be appealing and have

¹³ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10; Robinson, *Your Country Needs You*, 36.

high incentives. To achieve the goals and solve the nursing shortage, the Nurse Training Act of 1943 was developed to increase the available nurse power by preparing more nurses, more rapidly.¹⁵

In 1943 the National Nursing Council for War Service and the Public Health Service established a quota of 65,000 new student nurses needed to offset the nursing shortage and proposed a new federal appropriation. The Nurse Training Act of 1943, as presented to a Congressional Committee, requested ten times the amount that already was appropriated to nursing education. The National Nursing Council and Public Health Service presented the need for more federal appropriations, noting that competition for womanpower was acute. An estimated seven million young women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one would be available for full-time employment and potential candidates for nurse training. In order to meet the need for 65,000 student nurses, approximately ten percent of each high school graduating class needed to be persuaded to enter nursing schools. In addition, wartime occupations needed women who normally would have been willing to pay for nurse training. As large numbers of graduate nurses continued to enter military service, it became essential to fill their places in civilian hospitals, and more student nurses proved a solution since they contributed about two-thirds of nursing care in hospitals associated with nursing schools. Increasing the number of student nurses would not only allow more graduate nurses to enter the workforce, but essential hospital services could be adequately staffed.¹⁶

Some government leaders feared that subsidizing nursing education might produce an excessive number of nurses when the war ended; nursing leaders assured them that peacetime

¹⁵ Lucile Petry, "U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps: Established under the Bolton Act," *American Journal of Nursing* 43, no .8, 704-705.

¹⁶ United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 15.

America would need to employ more nurses to care for veterans, expand public health programs, and supply the demands of expanding health insurance. Nursing schools themselves predicted a need of a steady supply of essential personnel including instructors and public health nurses. Nursing schools needed to properly staff schools in order to continue providing basic courses for nursing students as well as post-graduate and refresher programs to encourage promising nurses to continue nursing education.¹⁷

The most effective justification for the program was the need for federal appropriations to help in recruiting student nurses. Katherine Faville, chairman of the National Nursing Council Recruiting Committee stated, “Nursing is the only women’s war job at the time in which the trainee has to pay her way while she is training, and that is certainly a handicap in recruiting.” In order to recruit an adequate number of nurses, providing comparable financial assistance to those working in war industries was essential. Congresswoman Frances Payne Bolton from Ohio agreed with Faville: “nursing is the only woman’s group which goes into the Army and Navy already trained and at the individual student’s own expense unless she is needy and thereby eligible for a scholarship. It is not fair.” Speaking before Congress, she argued that the government should not “expect to attract student nurses if they are to pay for their own education, while students of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary, chemistry, physics, and engineering have their educations paid by the Federal Government.”¹⁸

Bolton became the public patron of the Nurse Training Act of 1943, introducing the bill to Congress in June. The Act meant “to provide for the training of nurses for the armed forces,

¹⁷ Petry, “U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps,” 708.

¹⁸ United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 17; “Notes on talk by Congresswoman France Payne Bolton Before Institute of Womens’ Professional Relations On Student War Nursing Reserve Plan”, April 9, 1943, Con 9, Folder 137, Bolton MSS; “Cost and Duration of the Proposed Program” *Congressional Record*, 78th Cong., 2nd Sess., Vol. 89, pt. 3: p4462.

governmental and civilian hospitals, health agencies, and war industries, through grants to institutions providing such training, and for other purposes.” There seemed to be very little congressional opposition to the contents of the Act; concerns mostly involved practical issues. In House hearings, committee members were most worried about outdoor uniforms and the participation of all accredited institutions in the program; in Senate hearings, questions turned on the relationships of schools and hospitals, maintenance, and tuition.

The Nurse Training Act of 1943, later known as the Bolton Bill, passed unanimously in June, and on July 1, 1943, Public Law Number 74 created the United States Cadet Nurse Corps. The Corps was administered under the United States Public Health Service, which established the Division of Nurse Education and appointed Lucile Petry, a registered nurse, to serve as the director of the Cadet Nurse Corps. The new division administered the Bolton Bill, and the appropriations amounted to more than fifty percent of the entire Public Health Service budget. On July 5 Surgeon General Thomas Parran approved the rules and regulations of the Cadet Nurse Corps, and they were published in the Federal Register on July 9.¹⁹

The Cadet Nurse Corps provided funding for student nurse training, postgraduate courses, and refresher nursing courses. Young women joining the Corps simply committed to working in a military or civilian hospital for the duration of the war following the completion of their nurse training to be eligible for Corps benefits. Women between the ages of seventeen and thirty-five needed a high school diploma from an accredited institution. Two particular stipulations opened the Corps to additional groups of women, allowing thousands more to join the program, which did not ban married students, and prohibited discrimination based on “race,

¹⁹ *United States Statues at Large*, Nurse Training Act of 1943., Pub. L. 74, 15 June 1943, Stat. 57, 153-155; Mill Ada Belle McCleery, “Report on Student War Nursing Reserve Bill H.R. 2664, Con 9, Folder 137, Bolton MSS.

color, or creed.” The Corps not only assisted young women graduating high school and entering nursing school, but student nurses already enrolled in schools of nursing could also become members of the Corps had they been admitted to nursing school after January 1, 1941.

All that was required to join the Corps was an acceptance into a school of nursing and a commitment to serve in a civilian or military hospital for the duration of the war. Young women did not sign contracts, but were expected to uphold their commitments. The U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps Induction Pledge was recited by Cadet nurses during induction ceremonies throughout the country.

At this moment of my induction into the United States Cadet Nurse Corps of the United States Public Health Service:

I am solemnly aware of the obligations I assume toward my country and toward my chosen profession.

I will follow faithfully the teachings of my instructors and the guidance of the physicians with whom I work;

I will hold in trust the finest traditions of nursing and the spirit of the corps;

I will keep my body strong, my mind alert, and my heart steadfast;

I will be kind, tolerant and understanding;

Above all, I will dedicate myself now and forever to the triumph of life over death.

As a Cadet Nurse, I pledge to my country my service in essential nursing for the duration of the war.²⁰

Corps benefits were appealing. The Corps provided financial aid to cover tuition, fees, and living expenses including room, board, laundry, textbooks, health, and laboratory fees. Financial aid also supplied each Cadet Nurse with an outdoor uniform with Cadet Nurse Corps and the Public Health Service insignias. In efforts to compete with other wartime services, the Corps gave monthly stipends to cover personal expenses ranging in value based on how long one had been in school. Pre-Cadets in their first nine months of school received fifteen dollars per

²⁰ “U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps Induction Pledge,” *American Journal of Public Health and the Nation's Health* vol. 34 (June 1944), 620.

month. Junior Cadets in training from fifteen to twenty months received twenty dollars per month; Senior Cadets received thirty dollars per month.²¹ The Cadet Nurse Corps was transparent: it provided women with an educational opportunity during wartime and seemingly posed no threat to existing social practices.

All accredited nursing schools were encouraged to take advantage of the program's benefits. Once approved to receive federal funds, schools of nursing were required to implement an accelerated curriculum. The traditional three year academic curriculum had to be altered to be completed in twenty-four to thirty months, in which student nurses received training in the four basic clinical experiences--general medicine, surgical, obstetrics and pediatrics. Six months before graduation, as a Senior Cadet, student nurses were required to fulfill a period of service in either a federal or civilian hospital in which they worked full-time under careful supervision. This student nurse training period would help relieve graduate nurses in the hospitals, and an accelerated program ensured that nurses continued to enter the workforce at a faster rate.²²

The Cadet Nurse Corps also emphasized the freedom of choice in choosing which nursing school to attend: no government schools existed for the training of Cadet Nurses. The Corps emphasized the fact that the program was in no way trying to standardize schools of nursing. The government underscored the privatized nature of the schools, and encouraged each school to retain its autonomy. Given the nation's fight against totalitarian regimes during the war, the Corps was keen to assure the public that governmental control was not being exerted

²¹ United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 15; "Information Program," Bolton MSS.

²² Thelma M. Robinson, *Your Country Needs You*, 99; United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 18; *Get free training with pay with the world's proudest profession: join the US Cadet Nurse Corps* (Washington: GPO, 1943), Louisiana State University Library Government Documents; Petry, "U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps: Established under the Bolton Act," 705.

over the medical education of nurses. Approximately eighty-five percent of the schools of nursing participated in the Cadet Nurse Corps; the conservative feature of school autonomy seemed to appeal to both the legislature and the public.²³

The Cadet Nurse Corps program was clear: it provided women with an educational opportunity during wartime and appeared to be a means of solving wartime demands that posed little threat to the conventional standards of the nursing profession. On the surface, the program seemed basic and “safe” in nature, but its chief legislative and public supporter, Republican Frances Payne Bolton, was also interested in what the legislation might achieve for the nursing profession, women, and racial minorities.

²³ United States, *U. S. Cadet Nurse Corps: Fact Sheet* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1943), copy in Louisiana State University Library Government Documents; United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 46; “Report on Student War Nursing Reserve Bill HR 2664,” Cont 9, Folder 137, Bolton MSS.

CHAPTER TWO: THE NURSES' PATRON

At the time Frances Payne Bolton entered Congress in 1940, she represented one of only nine women in the House of Representatives. Political participation differed for men and women in two ways—women were elected or appointed to high-level party or public offices in small numbers and used their collective efforts to advance the position of women. Though few women served in Congress, virtually every congresswoman who served during World War II sponsored at least one piece of legislation designed to eliminate discrimination against women and provide assistance to advance their opportunities.²⁴

It came as little surprise that Republican Congresswoman Frances Payne Bolton, representing Ohio's 22nd district, introduced the Nurse Training Act of 1943. Nurses and the nursing profession had drawn Bolton's attention since she was a young girl; throughout her adult life, she supported and advocated changes on the profession's behalf. Although furthering the nursing profession was one of Bolton's central initiatives, nurses were not her only concern. Her progressive attitude regarding greater equality for both women and racial minorities placed her on the cusp of wartime consensus. In the early 1940s, Bolton anticipated the changes that would take place for women and racial minorities, and legislation such as the Cadet Nurse Corps helped to initiate and promote changes leading to greater equality.

Frances Payne Bingham was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on March 29, 1885, to Charles W. Bingham and Mary Perry Payne Bingham. Her family was one of the wealthiest in the United States at the time; not only did her father establish the Standard Tool Company which helped establish the city as a machine-tool center, but he also expanded his interests into coal, copper mines, and banking. Bolton's uncle, Oliver Payne, who co-founded the Standard Oil Company

²⁴ Susan H. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 143, 151.

with John D. Rockefeller, established trust funds for each of his nieces and nephews. Bolton grew up in a well-staffed house on Cleveland's fashionable Euclid Avenue, reared in the Victorian tradition emphasizing moral principles and strict discipline. In the late nineteenth century, the notion that Bolton might one day enter politics was unimaginable, but if her namesake was a reflection of Bolton's own personality, boundaries were easily broken. Bolton's parents named their fourth child after a cousin, Fanny Frances Payne, who lived with the Paynes on Euclid Avenue after being banished from her father's house at nineteen for reading books by an author he deemed unsuitable for ladies—Ralph Waldo Emerson.²⁵

Bolton's education reflected her family's wealth and prominence. She attended Hathaway-Brown School, a private all-female school in Cleveland, until her mother's death in January 1898. Following her mother's death, she spent two years abroad traveling throughout Europe, attending a school for girls in Dieudonne, France. At her father's insistence, Bolton attended Miss Spence's School for Girls in New York City after returning to the United States, but it seems Bolton had a difficult time measuring up to the standards of the school. She finished Miss Spence's School for Girls in 1904, but did not obtain a full diploma. Nor did she earn the Spence Certificate; Bolton received a Special Certificate, which represented her successful work in restricted fields of study. She became one of the few Congresswomen who did not attend college.²⁶

In 1907 Bolton married Chester Castle Bolton, a neighbor and son of family friends with a similar Cleveland background. Originally he had shown little interest in politics; however,

²⁵ Hope Chamberlin, *A Minority of Members: Women in the U.S. Congress* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 129; David Goldsmith Loth, *A Long Way Forward: The Biography of Congresswoman Frances P. Bolton* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1957), 1, 3, 17.

²⁶ Loth, *A Long Way Forward*, 42-48, 52, 57-58; Annabel Paxton, *Women in Congress* (Richmond, VA: Dietz Press, 1945), 66.

following service as a member of the Council of National Defense in Washington, DC, and the General Munitions Board, as well serving as an officer on the General Staff in the War Department, he ran for the Ohio State Senate and was elected in 1922. Chester Bolton eventually was elected to the House of Representatives from Ohio's 22nd District in 1929, where he served for five terms before his death in 1939. The Boltons were married for thirty-two years and raised three sons, one of whom later served in Congress alongside his mother. Their youngest child, a daughter, died in infancy after Bolton contracted influenzal pneumonia during her pregnancy.²⁷

Bolton was unconventional and open-minded towards different types of treatment. As she struggled to regain her strength, she was in constant pain and suffered from multiple neuritis, today known as polyneuropathy--an inflammation of the peripheral nerves mainly affecting one's extremities. She also experienced headaches and underwent a kidney operation for relief, but doctors feared she had only a few years to live. At a party, an acquaintance from New York told Bolton of a teacher of "physical re-education" who had cured her of a codeine addiction. Bolton traveled to New York and began rebuilding her body using Gatustha Yoga, which she credited for restoring her health.²⁸

As a mother, Bolton also was interested in education, especially when her sons entered school. In the early 1920s, the new and powerful influence of movies became known as parents worried more about bad ventilation and strained eyesight than the dangerous plots involving sex and crimes. As the parent representative at her sons' school, Bolton encouraged the headmaster to confine movies to weekend activities and provide more "wholesome recreation."²⁹ Bolton's

²⁷ Loth, *A Long Way Forward*, 67-68, 117-118.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 113-117.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

concern with movies, however, did not end as she anticipated their potential to affect audiences. In 1925 she established the National Committee for the Study of Juvenile Reading to examine methods for increasing interest in reading, expanding it to include the effects of radio and movies on young people. Out of this organization, Bolton established the Payne Fund Study and Experiment Fund, later shortened to the Payne Fund Studies, in 1927.³⁰

The Payne Fund Studies began as a series of projects that focused on the relationship between movie attendance and children's attitudes, emotions, and conduct. The program eventually grew to include studies on film's impact on sexual attitudes, moral values, and delinquent behavior. Though the Payne Fund Studies demonstrated that movies affected children's emotions and attitudes, some researchers' emphasized the negative implications that movies had upon children.³¹ Bolton recognized and understood the potential power of motion pictures to sway audiences; ironically, the influence of films over their audiences would be used to great effect and high frequency during World War II, even involving her own nursing education bill.

Bolton's widowhood in 1939 brought new responsibilities, decisions, and opportunities. Her husband's death provided her with an opportunity to enter Congress. This would have been unimaginable had she been married or a young mother; women entering Congress was still rare. Bolton's decision to seek her husband's seat in the House of Representatives might have seemed odd given her disinterest in suffrage for women, or her admission that she cast an "unthinking ballot" year after year.³²

³⁰ Garth S. Jowett, *et al.*, *Children and the Movies: Media Influence and the Payne Fund Controversy* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 20; David Goldsmith Loth, *A Long Way Forward*, 134.

³¹ Jowett, *Children and the Movies*, 57, 91.

³² Paxton, *Women in Congress*, 67; Loth, *A Long Way Forward*, 193.

Twenty-two years before, the first women had been sworn into Congress, and though it was not uncommon for widows to fill the rest of their husbands' terms, they then mostly retired into obscurity. One exception was Edith Nourse Rogers of Lowell, Massachusetts, who sought her husband's seat in 1925, became one of the few Republicans to retain her seat throughout the New Deal, and served until her death in 1960.³³ Bolton ran in a special election in February 1940, defeating Democrat Anthony A. Flegler by an almost two to one margin; her announcement that she would return the \$10,000 pension Congress voted to all widows of congressmen certainly did not hurt her popularity. At fifty-five years old, Bolton served as one of only nine Congresswomen in the 76th Congressional sessions. Her leadership skills allowed her to be reelected for the next twenty-nine years. She became a popular congresswoman; when asked where she received her calm disposition and even temper, she replied, "Where few want to go . . . in hell!"³⁴ Later when asked why she fought to retain her husband's seat in Congress against men who originally supported her decision to finish her husband's term but became annoyed at her decision to seek reelection, she replied, "The men so much wanted to get me out that I determined they would have to put up with me."³⁵

As war in Europe approached, her votes cast in Congress about American neutrality reflected her vaguely-isolationist views and those of her constituents. She reluctantly supported the draft bill, considered controversial at the time, since peacetime conscription had never been implemented, but hoped that the argument of using American strength to discourage an aggressor might prove true. She voted against Roosevelt's "billion dollars for defense" and the Lend-Lease Act of 1941 that entitled the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, as well as their other

³³ Chamberlin, *A Minority of Members*, 131; Rudolf Engelbarts, *Women in the United States Congress, 1917-1972* (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1974), 33.

³⁴ Chamberlin, *A Minority of Members*, 128.

³⁵ Loth, *A Long Way Forward*, 192-195, 202-203; Chamberlin, *A Minority of Members*, 131.

European allies, to receive war material from the United States. However, she gradually moved toward supporting national preparedness, though hoping an alternative to war could be found. She represented her constituents as a conservative Republican, though open-minded about the future. Not only did she advocate elevating the status of women through nursing education, but she also championed equal rights for racial minorities through personal and political ventures.³⁶

Bolton began building her legislative career by promoting measures that advanced the nursing profession. Nurses and the nursing profession became a passion of Bolton's in her late teens, the start of a lifetime devoted to improving the profession and nurses' education. Cleveland's yearly debutantes customarily organized their members, adopted a group name, and undertook the support of a local charity. In 1904 Bolton's group named themselves The Brownies; their first venture into community service included rolling bandages and making dressings to be used by the Visiting Nurses Association. Their service was successful since no commercial supplier of dressings and bandages existed at the time, and they began to expand their community service. To lighten the burden of public health nurses of the Visiting Nurse Association, the Brownies began accompanying public health nurses on their rounds by carrying extra supplies and assisting them in homes. Bolton assisted for months without her father's permission, and as she traveled with Visiting Nurses five days a week, she ventured into Cleveland's poorest neighborhoods--neighborhoods most girls of her social standing never encountered. She described tenements where a single room housed an entire family and observed that African-Americans were housed and educated more poorly than their white neighbors, mostly Central and Eastern European immigrants. Although Bolton received a

³⁶ Chamberlin, *A Minority of Members*, 132-128; Engelbarts, *Women in the United States Congress*, 47.

conservative upbringing, these youthful experiences might be credited for initiating her progressive attitude.³⁷

Long before becoming a Congresswoman, Bolton began advocating changes to better the profession, identifying herself with the nursing cause through her experiences in the slums of Cleveland. She became increasingly unsatisfied with the way nurses were educated, as well as their poor living conditions. Her first official advocacy in behalf of nurses took place before the board of Cleveland's Lakeside Nursing School. Nurses were dissatisfied with their education and housing, as well as the widely-held opinion that nursing consisted of menial tasks to aid the sick. A friend of Bolton's attended Lakeside Nursing School, the principal institution in Cleveland for nurse training, and proposed to ask to go before the board to ask for better living quarters and a better education. Because of a speech impediment, she asked Bolton to speak in her behalf. Bolton described the reasons "our custodians of health should not be treated as domestic servants," invited the board members to visit the "attic rooms" and see the conditions where the nurses were required to live, and challenged them to sleep soundly afterwards.³⁸ This was not her only experience in promoting changes within the nursing profession.

During World War I, Bolton supported the national war effort by promoting national nursing legislation. The nation needed skillful nurses, she declared, but government leaders disagreed as to whether professional nurses and volunteer nurses could do the same work. Bolton publically supported the use of professional nurses to treat America's military men, noting the difference between her own volunteer efforts, and the skills of a professional nurse. Red Cross officials claimed volunteer nurses were already trained to care for wounded men,

³⁷ Loth, *A Long Way Forward*, 61-65; Chamberlin, *A Minority of Members*, 129; Engelbarts, *Women in the United States Congress*, 46.

³⁸ Loth, *A Long Way Forward*, 70-72; Chamberlin, *A Minority of Members*, 130.

needing only permission to travel overseas. Bolton, however, took an active role in lobbying for professional nurses to be used by the military and helped convince the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, a fellow Clevelander, that establishing an Army School of Nursing ensured an adequate number of prepared nurses to take care of the wounded. She refused to leave Baker's office until the activation order establishing the Army School of Nursing was signed. Establishing an Army School of Nursing helped improve nurse training and helped legitimize nurses by overturning a tradition that established nurse training as an apprenticeship method rather than a professional scientific training.³⁹ Not only did the Army School of Nursing improve nurse training, but it also helped to foster the acceptance of women as commissioned members of the armed forces.⁴⁰

As a Congresswoman, Bolton continued to support nursing and also hoping to bring greater equality to women in the armed forces. One of her first actions in Congress involved securing passage of a bill which allowed nurses to be commissioned as members of the armed forces. A nurse receiving full military rank, not simply the "relative rank" that World War I nurses received, was a step toward gender equality. Bolton actively supported women's participation in the military, and later in her career, even urged that women be subject to the draft, as she vigorously opposed distinctions between the sexes in privileges, opportunities, and duties. In reference to women being drafted she stated, "I am afraid that gallantry is sorely out of date, and as a woman I find it rather stupid." Her concern for equality was not restricted to women; she also concerned herself with discrimination against men in the nursing profession and

³⁹ Frances Payne Bolton, "The New Nurse Training Program (for Modern Hospital Sept. Issue)", July 21, 1934, Cont 9, Folder 138, Bolton MSS.

⁴⁰ Loth, *A Long Way Forward*, 99-104, 108; Chamberlin, *A Minority of Members*, 130.

eventually sponsored an equal-rights-for-men bill which authorized the Army and Navy to commission male nurses.⁴¹

During World War II, Bolton sought federal financial assistance for nursing education to draw more young women into the profession. She supported the Labor-Federal Security Appropriations Act of 1942. In this act, her successful amendment to include the word “student nurse” made the appropriations available to young women attending nursing school and lifted restrictions that specified appropriations only to graduate nurses continuing their education or inactive nurses enrolling in refresher courses. The \$1.2 million appropriation was not enough to handle the nursing shortage; Bolton continued to push for greater appropriations that led to the development of the Nurse Training Act of 1943 that created one of the largest women’s uniformed organizations--the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps.⁴²

Bolton’s passion for the nursing profession and women also extended to African-Americans. Bolton and her husband were members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and donated to the organization regularly. As early as 1935, Bolton contributed to the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses. By 1943 she also remained in frequent contact with Claude A. Barnett, head of the Associated Negro Press, who sent updates and enclosed press clippings from African-American newspapers. In July 1943 Barnett wrote specifically asking for more information on the Cadet Nurse Corps to better present the program to readers.⁴³

⁴¹ Chamberlin, *A Minority of Members*, 132-133; Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 151.

⁴² *Congressional Record*, 77th Congress, 1st Sess., Vol. 87, pt. 5: 4714; Paxton, *Women in Congress*, 65.

⁴³ Letter from Walter White, Secretary NAACP to Mrs. Chester C. Bolton, August 10, 1943, Cont 87, Folder 1544, Bolton MSS; Letter from Mabel Keaton Staupers, NACGN, to Mrs. Chester C. Bolton, September 13, 1935, Cont. 96, Folder 1687, Bolton MSS; Letter from

Bolton, as a member of and contributor to African-American organizations and institutions, was called on to promote specific causes. Bolton helped support the Tuskegee Institute, and in 1940 President F. D. Patterson wrote to Bolton explaining reasons why Tuskegee was an ideal base for an African-American army pursuit squadron. Its year-round training capabilities and possible cooperation between training programs and institute facilities, he noted, were desirable features for a training air base. Patterson asked Bolton to convey her endorsement of Tuskegee to General H. H. Arnold, the Commanding General of the U.S. Air Force during World War II. Although it is unclear whether Bolton expressed her endorsement to Arnold specifically, she was among those who suggested that Tuskegee Institute be considered for establishing a base for an African-American pursuit squadron.⁴⁴ In October 1941, by unanimous vote, Bolton became a trustee of Tuskegee Institute.⁴⁵

During World War II, Bolton actively supported African-American nurses in the Army Nurse Corps, insisting they be given full opportunities. In 1944 she traveled to England, where a group of nurses, having recently completed orientation courses at a base near London, hoped to be sent to a hospital in France; instead, they were assigned to a prisoner-of-war hospital in Prestwick, England. The nurses' response was so negative that their commander asked Bolton to speak, knowing her support of both African-Americans and nurses. Bolton turned their disappointing assignment into an opportunity to show that the Aryan doctrine of superiority was

Claude A. Barnett to Frances Payne Bolton, February 3, 1943, Con. 9 Folder 1423, Bolton MSS; Letter to E. J. Waterfield from Claude Barnett, July 6, 1943, Cont. 9 Folder 1424, Bolton MSS.

⁴⁴ Letter from F.D. Patterson to Frances Payne Bolton, December 11, 1940, Cont. 90 Folder 1586, Bolton MSS; Letter from Frances Payne Bolton to Dr. H. W. Hunter, April 29, 1941, Cont. 90, Folder 1586, Bolton MSS.

⁴⁵ Letter from William Jay Schieffelin to Frances Payne Bolton, October 23, 1941, Cont. 90, Folder 1586, Bolton MSS.

nonsense.⁴⁶ As the nurses knew all-to-well, racial prejudices were not limited to Hitler's Nazi regime.

Bolton recognized the realities of race throughout the United States, predicting the struggle over racial matters that followed World War II. In June 1943, speaking to Congress on repealing the poll tax, Bolton justified the need for better understanding. She declared, "To my mind this issue is one that transcends every other issue we have had because it takes up the great problem that will face the world after this war--race." Yet, Bolton did not stop at her recognition of the problems of race. She continued:

the laws of evolution are going to roll over us inevitably. We have a light to give to the world, but we must keep the light burning with decency and clarity and we must not be afraid to face the iniquities of our own souls frankly. We must be willing to take the results of what we have done and say: 'We have been wrong here, right here, wrong there and right here. Now let us clean it up and start again together. That is all the Negro asks to work together! He plays his part in the sun beside us, he is dying beside us and he is dying with the flag of our country at his lips if he can get it. What do we do? Ah, we should be ashamed that we do so little.

Bolton was met with hateful responses from some Southern congressmen. For Bolton, however, equality for African-Americans continued to be a priority.⁴⁷

The influences of Bolton's advocacy for the nursing profession, women, and African-Americans came together in the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps legislation. Bolton anticipated the social changes that were to take place after World War II and, in many ways, the Cadet Nurse Corps legislation helped promote these changes. Whether providing women with a career and profession, greater economic freedom or equality, or promoting equal rights for African-Americans, Bolton's wartime legislation endorsed each of these issues. Bolton continued to be

⁴⁶ Loth, *A Long Way Forward*, 217.

⁴⁷ Associated Negro Press, "Congressman Bolton Upholds Cause of Negroes," News clipping, Cont. 80, Folder 1425, Frances Payne Bolton Papers.

actively involved with the Cadet Nurse Corps throughout the war. She not only attended Cadet Nurse Corps induction ceremonies, but as her main focus became Cadet Nurse Corps recruitment, her national congressional standing provided her with an opportunity to highlight the Corps' progressive nature. Though the program appeared to be an effective means of solving wartime demands, the Cadet Nurse Corps recruitment campaign also had to persuade women that nursing meant a promising future.

CHAPTER THREE: SELLING A VIRTUOUS CALLING: MADISON AVENUE AND HOLLYWOOD

The U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps' recruitment campaign proved to be a massive undertaking; mass media proved an essential tool. Effective recruitment was essential to the program's goal: solving the nursing shortage. The government recognized nursing as an essential wartime service with the passing of the Nurse Training Act of 1943, but in order to recruit effectively, the public needed to understand the immediate necessity for more student nurses. More importantly, the Cadet Nurse Corps needed to entice capable young women, promising long-lasting benefits of a practical education with both professional and social advantages.

To create such an appeal, recruitment revolved around a progressive media campaign meant to deliver effectively the advantages of the Corps while projecting a sense of youthfulness and style. The image the Cadet Nurse Corps provided was something women actually could hope to achieve and, equally important, make the nursing profession more appealing. Nursing offered exciting adventures during wartime, but its reputation as a career for the wholesome, dull, or matronly needed upgrading. The profession needed to appeal not only to a younger generation of women, but also to persuade them that the profession had lasting economic and social benefits.

The nation required women's participation in the workforce; the phrase "woman's place is in the war" represented the real need of women as both war workers and citizens. Extensive media campaigns were specifically designed to sell all types of war work to women by appealing to women's sense of patriotism.⁴⁷ Patriotism and women's civic responsibilities were steadily reinforced; women achieved greater civic authority by supporting the war on the home front as

⁴⁷ Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1934-145* (Princeton, NJ: University Press, 1978), 3-4, 75, 155; Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 20.

responsible consumers. Consumption had become a source of American identity; for women, it had become both a civic activity and during wartime, a civic responsibility. Advertising during the war continually emphasized the link between consumption and citizenship in efforts to mobilize women for war.⁴⁸ Whether buying war bonds, rationing food items, or entering war work, women learned that all of these activities represented patriotic duty.

American propaganda campaigns to recruit women for war work were extensive as the advertising industry played a powerful role in supporting the war and persuading women to take war jobs.⁴⁹ The product needed to appeal to the prevailing attitudes as to women's proper roles in society, yet at the same time, expand women's responsibilities and capabilities. Advertisers balanced these competing goals. Public images of women changed to incorporate women in previously-defined masculine employment, but attempted to retain women's sex roles and the skills traditionally associated with "female nature." One factor helping recruitment was the traditional nature of nursing--both its public image and its sexual role were within skills traditionally considered "feminine." Overall, women's war work was presented as exciting and an opportunity to earn higher wages; as patriotic citizens, women were continually encouraged to fulfill their duties by supporting the war effort in any way possible.⁵⁰

The recruitment quota was daunting. In its first year alone, the Cadet Nurse Corps needed 65,000 new student nurses--almost double the number admitted to nursing schools during peacetime.⁵¹ While the military used conscription to obtain its manpower, the Corps could only rely on persuasion to draw young women into the nursing profession, using many recruitment

⁴⁸ Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: the Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 13, 63, 67.

⁴⁹ Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War*, 174.

⁵⁰ Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 42, 56.

⁵¹ United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 29.

tactics utilized by other campaigns to draw young women into war work. The Corps' first operation in its recruitment campaign was to provide a concrete link between nursing and war work.

To recruit young women, an explanation of how student nurses were part of the war effort was essential--joining the U. S. Cadet Nurse Corps became a way that young women could publically affirm their patriotism and citizenship. Explaining nursing as war work became one of the main focuses of the publicity campaign as the Corps tried to meet its large recruitment quotas. The Cadet Nurse Corps identified all Cadet nurses as "participants in America's war program" insisting Cadet nurses "wage war while they learn."⁵² In Frances Bolton's radio interviews about the Corps, she emphasized student nursing as war work. In a 1943 National Broadcasting Radio interview titled "Nursing, America's Woman-Power Shortage Number 1," Bolton argued that the moment a student nurse enters training she begins to serve her country by relieving a graduate nurse for the armed forces or other civilian services. A few months later she was more emphatic, declaring that nursing was, in fact, the number one service for women in both wartime and peacetime.⁵³

Even choosing a proper name for the program can be interpreted as a decision to equate nursing with essential war services, as well as attracting recruits. The program name evolved from the "Victory Nurse Corps."⁵⁴ "Victory" was reminiscent of victory gardens and other home front initiatives to relieve food shortages, but the "United States Cadet Nurse Corps" resembled

⁵² "Information Program for the United States Cadet Nurse Corps," Cont 9, Folder 138, Bolton MSS.

⁵³ Frances Payne Bolton, radio interview by NBC Network "Nursing, America's Woman-Power Shortage Number 1," May 12, 1943, Cont 111, Folder 1938; radio interview by NBC Network, "Interview with Representative Frances Payne Bolton of Ohio by Mary Mason," July 3, 1943, Cont 111, Folder 1938, both in Bolton MSS.

⁵⁴ United States Federal Security Agency, *The United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 13.

the official names of women's military branches. The use of the military terms "cadet," as well as "corps," helped to further legitimate student nursing with war work and equate its importance to official branches of the military like the Army Nurse Corps and the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps. Although the Corps described nursing as war work to encourage young women to enter the nursing profession, recruitment also recognized the importance of public service to women who joined the Corps and the nursing profession.



Figure 1. U.S. Cadet Nurses in uniform. Source: Bernard Becker Library Digital Collection, Washington University, St. Louis, MO; U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps uniform jacket. Source: Louisiana State University Textile and Costume Museum⁵⁵

⁵⁵ The Cadet Nurse Corps uniform jacket in the Louisiana State University Textile and Costume Museum was donated by Jeanelle Beskin. Beskin enrolled in the Cadet Nurse Corps while studying at Fairview Hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota, before meeting her future husband at Great Lakes Naval Hospital where he was an intern. The Beskins moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1953 where her husband, Dr. Charles Beskin, became the city's first thoracic and cardiovascular surgeon. Many thanks to Pamela Vinci, Curator of the LSU Textile and Costume Museum, for her assistance in locating the Cadet Nurse Corps uniform jacket.

Women in uniform were a new phenomenon; military recruitment relied heavily on the “glamour of service” within the armed forces, and the visible recognition of war service the uniform brought.⁵⁶ The Cadet Nurse Corps capitalized on the appeal of women in uniform and provided student nurses with an official outdoor uniform. Not only did the Corps need an appealing image, but so, too, did the nursing profession; the Cadet Nurse Corps uniform provided an attractive image for young women contemplating a profession in nursing.

The design of an attractive Cadet nurse outdoor uniform was not taken lightly. In August 1943 fashion editors in New York City gathered at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel to choose the uniform that would be manufactured and distributed by J. C. Penney. The outfits chosen were designed by Molly Parnis, a successful designer of women’s dresses and suits. The Cadet Nurse Corps provided both summer and winter uniforms. Winter uniforms consisted of a suit, skirt and jacket, made of gray wool flannel with silver buttons, red shoulder epaulets, and insignia; summer suits were styled exactly as the winter, but made of gray and white striped cotton. Sally Victor, a famous milliner, designed the signature beret. The beret was made of gray felt and worn on the side or back of the head. Though many might have associated the beret with French headwear, the Cadet Nurse Corps adopted the beret in homage to British commander Bernard Montgomery who had recently led Allied troops to victory in 1942 at the Battle of El Alamein in North Africa.⁵⁷ The uniform offered a sleek silhouette, but the insignia on the beret, buttons, and lapel suggested a touch of genuine militaristic style.

⁵⁶ Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War*, 143.

⁵⁷ “Uniforms Chosen for Cadet Nurse,” *New York Times*, August 17, 1943, 20; “Berets to be worn by Cadet Nurses,” *New York Times*, November 23, 1943, 20; Federal Security Agency, “Regulations for Uniforms for U. S. Cadet Nurse Corps,” Cont 9, Folder 139, Bolton MSS.



Figure 2: United States Public Health Service seal. Source: Iowa Digital Library, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA; Cadet Nurse Corps sleeve patch. Source: Rochester General Hospital Digital Exhibit, Rochester, NY.

The stylish uniform and beret employed symbolic motifs. Displayed on the beret was the insignia of the United States Public Health Service that consisted of the staff of Aesculapius with the wing of Mercury and a fouled anchor, an anchor chain wound around the hook of the anchor, symbolic of a sick or injured sailor. Lapel insignias consisted of a pair of silver winged caducei—symbols of the medical practice. The U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps motif was worn on the left sleeve which consisted of an eight-point Maltese cross; the symbols dated back to 1099 when they were adopted by the first nursing order, the Knights Hospitaliers. The cross represented “human compassion and lifesaving skills,” and each point of the Maltese cross represented one of the beatitudes from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.⁵⁸

In order to attract young women, the Corps emphasized the elements of youthfulness and style that could be found in the Corps, but the uniform did more than help a Cadet nurse portray a chic, modern image. The Corps brought a contemporary look to nursing to market the profession to a younger generation. The visual presentation of what a Cadet nurse could hope to

⁵⁸ United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 35; Federal Security Agency, “Regulation for Uniforms for the U. S. Cadet Nurse Corps;” United States, *U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps: Fact Sheet* (Washington: GPO, 1943), Government Documents, Louisiana State University Library, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

achieve outwardly was widely advertised. But the building of an image did not stop at a uniform, and companies were keen to capitalize on the number of women enrolled in the Cadet Nurse Corps. The Lenthéric Cosmetic Company created a special shade of lipstick and rouge called “Rocket Red” to match the bright red trim on Corps uniforms and also sold gray plastic cosmetic containers adorned with the Corps motif.⁵⁹ Public service, in wartime, could include a touch of crassness.

The uniform provided a military look that helped the Corps compete with the armed forces in recruiting young women; it was no longer a requirement for women to be part of America’s military in order to visibly participate in the war effort. The militaristic look of the uniform resulted in nurses being considered as members of the military and caused enough of a problem that the Corps issued transportation cards verifying that the nurses were not in a branch of the armed forces and were not required to show furlough papers.⁶⁰ The uniforms were popular among the Cadet nurses themselves. In a letter to the head of Charity Hospital School of Nursing in New Orleans, Louisiana, it was noted that young women had been spotted wearing the uniforms in public before the proper induction ceremony; the busybody informed the hospital head that “the uniforms have been seen on Canal Street.”⁶¹ The uniforms attracted the attention of both Cadet Nurse Corps members and the general public.

The official uniforms were a major component in Cadet Nurse Corps recruitment and providing a specific image and public identity for the Corps. All recruitment material would contain the distinctive Cadet uniform and insignias, making the Corps more readily recognizable

⁵⁹ “Lipstick for Cadet Corps,” *American Journal of Nursing* 44, no. 11 (November 1944), 1079.

⁶⁰ “Transportation Forms for Cadets,” *American Journal of Nursing* 44, no. 9 (September 1944), 887.

⁶¹ Letter from Ruth Ingram to Charity Hospital School of Nursing, Collection 220-207, Charity Hospital School of Nursing Collection, Earl K. Long Library, Louisiana and Special Collections, University of New Orleans.

to the American public. Frances Bolton declared that the Nurse Training Act of 1943 sought to encourage more young women to enter the nursing profession in two ways; the first included the uniform and insignia which suggested that student nurses were essential war workers.⁶² Other Cadet Nurse Corps informational material emphasized that the distinctive outdoor uniform helped identify student nurses as official members of government wartime service.⁶³ Graduate nurses, however, appeared more indifferent to the idea of an outdoor uniform and its indication of one's status as a war worker, but Bolton defended the use of the uniform in recruitment. She emphasized that the uniform was not only an induction into war work, but an induction into the nursing profession, the point at which it proved most valuable in recruitment of student nurses. Bolton argued, "Since the student nurse indubitably renders a magnificently important and heroic war service, we must have the imagination and sympathy to give her the symbols of it."⁶⁴

Utilizing mass media to advertise both the image and benefits of the Corps was an essential tool used to recruit student nurses; government agencies helped to oversee publicity and recruitment campaigns. In efforts to gain support for the war effort, President Franklin Roosevelt created the Office of War Information (OWI) by executive order in June 1942. OWI's goals included leading campaigns to enhance the public understanding of the war, organizing government information activities, and working as a liaison with radio, press, and motion pictures.⁶⁵ Elmer Davis, a popular radio commentator, headed the OWI. Within the domestic branch of the OWI, divisions were responsible for heading different mediums disseminating war

⁶² Frances Payne Bolton, "A War Unit for Student Nurses," July 1943, Cont 9, Folder 138, Bolton MSS.

⁶³ "Information Program for the United States Cadet Nurse Corps," Bolton MSS.

⁶⁴ Frances Payne Bolton, "A War Unit for Student Nurses," Bolton MSS.

⁶⁵ Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits, and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 59; John Morton Blum, *V was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 31.

information. The Bureau of Motion Pictures (BMP) was created to advise Hollywood in the making of films to promote the war effort. Lowell Mellett, a former Scripps-Howard editor, ran the BMP from Washington, while his deputy, Nelson Poynter, publisher of the *St. Petersburg Times*, was the liaison in Hollywood.⁶⁶

The OWI insisted its job was to advise and not censor information, but never before had a government agency influenced and exerted so much control over motion pictures.⁶⁷ The OWI believed that movies held the power to mobilize a nation. Roosevelt commissioned Hollywood to “emotionalize” the war by making and selling feature films. He wrote to Mellett about his position of advising Hollywood: “The American motion picture is one of the most effective mediums in informing and entertaining citizens. The motion picture must remain free in so far as national security will permit. I want no censorship of motion pictures.”⁶⁸ Though the BMP supposedly only advised Hollywood, it continually attempted to influence film content.

The BMP was responsible for all aspects of using film to support the war effort. The Bureau’s three main objectives included producing informational or propaganda short films about the war, reviewing and coordinating filmmaking activities in other government agencies, and acting as a liaison with the motion picture industry. The BMP also obtained pledges from nearly every movie theater in the country to screen government films. Government short films were important to the war effort, but Poynter insisted that incorporating government messages into features films was equally important. The OWI was unsatisfied with the way Hollywood addressed and dealt with issues of war; the BMP believed it could help by reviewing scripts

⁶⁶ Clayton Koppes, “Hollywood and the Politics of Representation: Women, Workers, and African-Americans in World War II Movies,” in *The Home-Front War: World War II and American Society* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 25-26.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁶⁸ Thomas Schatz, *History of the American Cinema, Boom and Bust: The American Cinema in the 1940s* (New York: Scribner’s and Sons, 1997), 131, 139.

before production began.⁶⁹ The OWI and BMP wanted to capitalize on the large audiences Hollywood movies drew to theaters by including specific messages in film content, declaring that “motion pictures are better equipped than any other source of information, than Government agency or spokesman, to create the emotional enthusiasm and sense of individual responsibility which, combined, make for unceasing ‘war-mindedness.’”⁷⁰

To help oversee Hollywood’s role in the war effort, the OWI issued the “Government Information Manual for the Motion-Picture Industry” in 1942. The manual claimed its purpose was to “assist the motion picture industry in its endeavor to inform the American people, via the screen, of the many problems attendant on the war program.”⁷¹ Bringing to life the democratic ideas and values Americans had taken for granted now became Hollywood’s responsibility. The OWI issued the manual in a loose-leaf format so that updates could easily be incorporated; Poynter and his OWI staff suggested specific themes to be incorporated into story lines.⁷² Specific suggestions were made in ways to dramatize particular aspects of war issues including an emphasis on a “people’s war,” as well as recalling the historical developments that created the American heritage--“a 1942 version of 1776”.⁷³

Section V of the manual titled “The Home Front: What We Must Do/What We Must Give Up to Win the Fight” focused specifically on the sacrifices that civilians needed to make in order to support the war effort. The section explained the way in which movies could help

⁶⁹ Thomas Schatz, *History of the American Cinema*, 141, 15; Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, 63-64; Blum, *V was for Victory*, 36.

⁷⁰ United States, Office of War Information, Bureau of Motion Pictures, “Section V: The Home Front, Fact Sheet No. 13” *Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry* (Washington: GPO, 1942), Indiana University: Digital Archive Collection, <<http://www.libraries.iub.edu/index.php?pageId=3301>>.

⁷¹ United States, “Introduction,” *Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry*.

⁷² Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, 65.

⁷³ United States, “Section I: The Issues,” *Government Information Manual*.

civilians understand the importance of their contributions to the war effort and called for all-out sacrifices on the home front in order to win the war. The cost of victory might have appeared high, but the cost of loss would be worse--“if he loses the war, he loses everything.” This section also specifically addressed healthcare by emphasizing the role that health played on the home front and implored film producers to stress the importance of healthcare by accentuating that “health is an aid to victory.”

The manual encouraged filmmakers to emphasize the role of women in the armed forces and to dramatize their heroic sacrifices. It informed Hollywood that “there is now a Woman’s Army,” and the OWI urged them to show women replacing Army men in non-combatant positions and performing tasks in a businesslike manner--“It is not a lipstick, hairpin affair.” Hollywood films, the manual insisted, could inspire women to “supply the spark to transform willingness into action!”⁷⁴

The influence of film had the potential not only to mobilize women to enter the workforce, but also to inform American women of the essential nature of nursing and educate them regarding the benefits of the nursing profession. Movie attendance boomed during World War II, vastly increasing box-office receipts. In 1943 the release of “war films” reached its peak, comprising 29.3 percent of all films released, with box office receipts of some \$1.28 billion dollars.⁷⁵ The movies attracted women, comprising two-thirds of all attendees. Many movies were aimed at female audiences; their predominance gave Hollywood the opportunity to portray

⁷⁴ United States, “Discomfort or Defeat, Fact Sheet No. 13,” *Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry*.

⁷⁵ Thomas Schatz, *The History of American Cinema*, 240.

the necessity of women's war work, as well as the expansion of female responsibilities during wartime.⁷⁶

World War II was the "Golden Age" of nursing films.⁷⁷ One of the most popular of the wartime films with military heroines was Paramount Pictures' *So Proudly We Hail* (1943), which honored military nurses serving in the Pacific.⁷⁸ The film's director, Mark Sandrich, was best known for Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers musicals during the mid-1930s. In 1942 he directed both Fred Astaire and Bing Crosby in *Holiday Inn*, perhaps most memorable for Crosby's rendition of Irving Berlin's "White Christmas." Not only did *So Proudly We Hail* have a major Hollywood director to bring the story of nurses to the film screen, but it included star power. The film starred Claudette Colbert, an Academy Award winner for her role in *It Happened One Night* (1934), Veronica Lake, and Paulette Goddard. The male romantic leads were played by George Reeves and Sonny Tufts. Reeves eventually became America's Superman, and Tufts, after his first major film role in this movie, went on to act opposite stars Bing Crosby and Marilyn Monroe.⁷⁹

The film was inspired by the nurses of the Army Nurse Corps and their lives in the Pacific theater. The opening credits thanked the War Department, the Army Nurse Corps, and the American Red Cross for their cooperation, and special thanks were also given to a First Lieutenant, Eunice Hatchett, who was an Army nurse on both Bataan and Corregidor. The picture begins with a fragrant dedication suitable for wartime civilians:

⁷⁶ Sherna Berger Gluck, *Rosie the Riveter Revisited: Women, the War, and Social Change* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), 14; Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 191.

⁷⁷ Philip A. Kalisch and Beatrice J. Kalisch, "The Image of the Nurse in Motion Pictures," *American Journal of Nursing* 82, no. 4 (April 1982), 605-611.

⁷⁸ *So Proudly We Hail*, Dir. Mark Sandrich, Starring Claudette Colbert, Paulette Goddard, and Veronica Lake, Paramount Pictures, 1943.

⁷⁹ Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, 99.

Out of the black sorrow and tragedy of Bataan and Corregidor came a light---the light of a miracle! Eight American girls—Army Nurses—had been delivered from that holocaust. The story that follows is inspired by their courage, devotion and sacrifice, and is based on the records of the U.S. Army Nursing Corps. We dedicate this picture to them and their comrades still somewhere in the Philippines, and to nurses everywhere.

The story that followed provided Hollywood with an opportunity to dramatize the essential nature of nursing to the war effort. The film never claimed to be based on true events, but included elements that suggested it was based on true events—factoids, if not facts. Throughout the film, the narrator provides the specific location of the nurses and the reasons for their movements to different islands. This gave viewers the impression they were watching real events as they had unfolded.

The film's plot revolves around a group of Army nurses who ship out for Hawaii in November 1941. They reach the island following December 7, and join a convoy headed for the Philippines where they fulfill their nursing duties under grim conditions. As the Japanese advance toward American lines, U.S. hospital camps, prominently displaying the Red Cross flag, are nevertheless shelled by the enemy. As the Japanese continue to advance, the nurses are forced to flee, escaping only because Olivia (Veronica Lake), whose fiancé was killed by the Japanese, sacrifices herself by detonating a grenade hidden in her clothing as she walks into a crowd of Japanese troops. The nurses eventually evacuate to Corregidor and are finally rescued from the island and returned home.

Though the movie contains several action sequences--the Japanese bomb the hospitals and fighting continually threatens the nurses' safety--romance prevails throughout the film. The primary romance revolves around the main character of Lt. Janet "Davey" Davidson (Claudette Colbert) and Lt. John Somers (George Reeves). They meet as he recovers from a wound and are eventually married in the Philippines, despite military regulations forbidding nurses to marry.

The next day John leaves for Mindanao for desperately needed supplies and is later reported missing in action. Davey suffers a nervous collapse and remains in a trance-like state until her doctor reads a letter from John telling her of his safety. The plot does strain the credulity of modern viewers.



Figure 3: Army nurses in the sick bay as they convoy to the Philippines and in the “Jungle Hospital” on the island of Bataan. *Source:* Screenshots from Paramount Pictures’ *So Proudly We Hail*.

Though Paramount executives remained open to BMP-suggested themes, they rejected specific dialogue written for the film and ham-handed scenes laden with propaganda content. Poynter ordered Sandrich to incorporate more material and even wrote dialogue for a chaplain and nurses to specifically be used in the film. Poynter’s actions caught the attention of Paramount’s chief, Y. Frank Freeman, who retained influence in both Hollywood and Washington. For Freeman, Poynter’s suggestion of actual wording breached the industry’s contract with Hollywood, and was considered an intrusion on the studio’s control that could not be ignored. Poynter agreed that he overstepped his boundaries in writing dialogue.⁸⁰

The OWI was unsure how audiences would respond to the film. When the first script was sent to BMP in October 1942, OWI script reviewers Marjorie Thorson and Dorothy Jones

⁸⁰ Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, 110-112.

were undecided. Though they thought the script had potential for the propaganda program, they worried that a story of death and retreat might not be the right message to send as America became more deeply involved in combat. Poynter too had concerns about the stereotypical female characters who fought, ignored military regulations, and searched for romance; however, he liked the film's content that dealt with issues and highlighted the role of women at war which had often been neglected in Hollywood.⁸¹

Through Paramount Pictures ignored BMP suggested dialogue, *So Proudly We Hail* remained heavily influenced by propaganda. Specific theme suggestions found in the Government Information Manual for Motion Pictures are clearly presented in various stages of the film. The writers emphasized the American historical experiences of 1776; they reminded viewers of the previous hardships of the American Revolution and emphasized how it became a defining moment in American history. In dialogue between Kansas (Sonny Tufts) and Joan (Paulette Goddard), Kansas expresses disbelief that American Marines have landed only to be ordered off the island. Joan replies, "We've been out on our feet before. Remember Valley Forge? That was no strawberry festival." The "People's War" was also a prominent theme. In the final scenes of the movie as John's letter is read in voice over, the filmmakers deal specifically with the "people's war". John reads,

This is not a people's war because civilians also get killed. This is a people's war because they have taken over now and they're going to win it and end it with a purpose--to live like men with dignity and freedom. This is the good I've found. There is a small voice whispering around the earth and the people are beginning to talk across their boundaries. This voice will grow in volume until it thunders all over the world. It says, 'This is our war now and this time it will be our peace.'

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 99-100

So Proudly We Hail was released in June 1943, coinciding with the passage of the Nurse Training Act of 1943. The film glorified nurses and the nursing profession and portrayed their essential nature to the war effort. This heroic depiction surely boosted the recruitment of the Cadet Nurse Corps as the program providing funding to receive a nursing education as well as earning living expenses. The Corps provided young women with an opportunity to pursue the profession they had seen depicted on the screen free of charge.

Poynter seemed more than pleased with the final product, saying, “It’s beautiful!”⁸² Others were less enthusiastic. James Agee, film critic for *The Nation*, called the film “probably the most deadly-accurate picture that will ever be made of what the war looks like through the lenses of a housewives’ magazine romance.”⁸³ *The New Republic*’s Manny Farber criticized its “snide” attitude toward women and commented that “theater owners get their cheesecake in hunks so great that much of the movie hinges on Miss Goddard’s black nightie.”⁸⁴

Viewers thought otherwise. *So Proudly We Hail* earned \$3 million dollars and became the twelfth biggest box-office hit of 1943.⁸⁵ The film also received recognition from the film industry, receiving four Academy Award nominations--Alan Scott for Best Writing, Original Screenplay; Paulette Goddard for Best Actress in a Supporting Role; Best Black and White Cinematography; and Best Effects, Special Effects.⁸⁶ The OWI ranked the film among its best

⁸² *Ibid.*, 104.

⁸³ Thomas Schatz, *History of American Cinema*, 257.

⁸⁴ Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, 104.

⁸⁵ Thomas Schatz, *History of American Cinema*, 257.

⁸⁶ Richard Shale, *The Academy Awards Index: The Complete Categorical and Chronological Record* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 63, 87, 113, 342.

war films, and despite its conventional portrayal of women, *So Proudly We Hail* remains notable as the only wartime hit that focuses on women in combat zones.⁸⁷

Government short films also had their place in student nurse recruitment. Not only were short news clips of Roosevelt signing the Nursing Training Act into law screened before feature films, but in 1944, *Reward Unlimited* (1944) was produced specifically to introduce the Cadet Nurse Corps to audiences across America, as well as persuade young women to join the Corps.⁸⁸ The government short starred Dorothy McGuire, a rising young star in Hollywood who had landed a lead role in 1943's *Claudia*. The film's director, Jacques Tourneur, seemed an odd choice, given his previous experience as director of RKO Studio's horror films. His last three feature length movies before *Reward Unlimited* (1944) included *Cat People* (1942), *I Walked With a Zombie* (1943), and *The Leopard Man* (1943). One of the only similarities between Tourneur's *Reward Unlimited* (1944) and his horror films involve the thematic combination of spirituality and service reflected in *I Walked with a Zombie*.⁸⁹

Explaining Cadet Nurse Corps' benefits and explaining its role in the war effort was the key to the success of the film. Before Peggy (Dorothy McGuire) sends her boyfriend, Paul (James Brown), off to war, she vows to find war work "to bring you home quicker." On her way home from the train station, Peggy trips and falls on the sidewalk; a friendly neighbor, a nurse, treats Peggy's scraped knee. The nurse explains the need for more nurses and continues, "You

⁸⁷ Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, 104; Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory Black, "What to Show the World: The Office of War Information and Hollywood, 1942-1945," *Journal of American History*, 64, no. 1 (June 1977), 94-95.

⁸⁸ *Reward Unlimited*. Dir. Jacques Tourneur, Starring Dorothy McGuire. Vanguard Films, 1944, Distributed by War Activities Committee on the Motion Pictures Industry, Ball State University: Digital Media Repository, <<http://libx.bsu.edu/cdm4/browse.php?CISOROOT=/WWIIHistFilm&CISOSTART=1,81>>.

⁸⁹ Chris Fujiwara, *Jacques Tourneur: The Cinema of Nightfall* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1998), 123-124.

couldn't help more by becoming a nurse. You'll begin the very day you start when you help release a graduate nurse for duty with the Army or Navy." Peggy hurries home to explain her reasons for joining the Cadet Nurse Corps--nurse training was not merely a war job, but a profession. Though her mother protests, her father gives her his approval.

Peggy is shown training as a nurse, taking examinations and working in surgery and the pediatric ward. The script lays it on with a trowel. As she cares for a young boy, he says she is his favorite nurse because she has "kind of an inside shine. It shines through your eyes." She replies, "I guess that's what happens when you're happy." The distinctive Corps uniforms berets are displayed prominently, as well as school uniforms displaying Corps' insignia. The film appeals to women's patriotism, urging them to provide service to their country, and *America the Beautiful* accompanies the film's opening credits. As Peggy walks down the corridor, a voiceover urges young women who want to provide "immediate vital service" to the war effort and desire a "dignified career that you can continue after marriage and a valuable preparation for life" to apply at the nearest hospital.

In order to capitalize on film screenings, part of recruitment tactics included setting up recruitment booths in the lobbies of the movie theaters. Upon exiting, young women interested in nursing had the chance to leave their names and addresses to receive more information about schools of nursing and the profession.⁹⁰ These tactics provided a way for young women to react immediately to the call they saw on screen.

Film provided an excellent way to dramatize the essential need of student nurses and the benefits they received when joining the Cadet Nurse Corps. It was also another medium in

⁹⁰ "Nursing Council on National Defense--Progress Report," March 1943, Box 2, Folder Communication on Careers in Nursing Recruitment, 1941-1943, Careers in Nursing Committee Records, 1928-1958, (MSS 1840, 1893, 2288), Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA.

which the image of nurses and Cadet nurses could be displayed to the public. Not only did the public see their sacrifices, but they also learned of the real and essential healthcare duties that nurses performed.

The campaign for student nurses did not end in Hollywood. Cadet Nurse Corps literature, including posters, pamphlets, and information booklets, offered a good way to present the Corps in efforts to recruit young women. Equally important were state and local recruitment officers explaining benefits, as well as news and photographic releases in local and national newspapers. Print advertising in newspapers and magazines were a major part of the campaign. Advertising proved essential in explaining the benefits of the Corps, while also providing an appealing image that young women could emulate.

The War Advertising Committee (WAC), a branch within the OWI, coordinated the services of advertising agencies as the government continued to face publicity demands for war service recruitment throughout the war. The WAC was made up of Madison Avenue's finest, and in exchange for their cooperation and assistance with advertising, the U.S. Treasury ruled that advertising, in "reasonable" amounts, could be considered a tax deductible business cost. With tax incentives, businesses quickly took out ads for all war-related activities, including the recruitment of student nurses. Ray Rubicam of Young and Rubicam reported that more than \$1 billion dollars was "donated" by businesses throughout the war.⁹¹

Rubicam described war advertising as that "which induces people, through information, understanding, and persuasion, to take certain actions necessary to the winning of the war."⁹²

Through the WAC, most Cadet Nurse Corps recruitment materials were prepared by the J.

⁹¹ Richard R. Lingeman, *Don't You Know There's a War On?: The American Home Front, 1941-1945* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1970), 294.

⁹² Raymond Rubicam, "Advertising," in *While You Were Gone: A Report on Wartime Life in the United States*, ed. Jack Goodman (New York: Da Capo Press, 1946), 431.

Walter Thompson Agency. Product advertising was essential in attracting smart students, but equally important to educating parents about the benefits of the program. Through posters, pamphlets, radio, and print advertisement, the Cadet Nurse Corps campaigned to recruit young women across the nation.

In order to capitalize on the tax incentives offered to businesses, the J. Walter Thompson Agency created advertising “formula folders.” Within each folder, a dozen or more general advertisements were created and ready to be published immediately by private businesses in order to carry the message of the Cadet Nurse Corps. In this way, the Corps streamlined donations for advertisement. The formula folders not only provided sample advertisements, but also explained the Cadet Nurse Corps and the reasons for the creation of the program.⁹³ The formula folders also needed to entice private businesses to take out advertisement on the Corps’ behalf. Advertising would help carry the vital message of the demands for more student nurses and advertisers “will be giving a real boost to Victory by helping to safeguard the Nation’s health--both military and civilian.”⁹⁴

Businesses created their own advertisements, but an integral part of advertising was making the insignia and uniforms of the Corps readily recognizable wherever seen. For this reason, the symbols of the United States Public Health Service and the Cadet Nurse Corps insignia were displayed on nearly every advertisement, and the outdoor uniforms were often included. It was also important for the appeal to certain young women. Advertisers directed printed materials toward graduates of accredited high schools and explained that the medium through which potential student nurses were approached must be one that appealed to people of

⁹³ “Information Program for the U. S. Cadet Nurse Corps,” Bolton MSS.

⁹⁴ United States, Office of War Information and the U.S. Public Health Service, War Advertising Council, *How Advertisers Can Cooperate with the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps* (Washington: GPO, 1943), Government Documents, Louisiana State University Library.

“character” and “intelligence.”⁹⁵ In order for young women to respond to advertisements, advertisers argued that appeals needed to interpret young women’s thoughts and present them with sincerity and emotion. Advertising’s job was to create appeals—it called for more than presenting information; it called for inspiration.⁹⁶ The formula folders provided a great service in obtaining donated advertisement space. Private businesses donated an estimated \$13 million dollars worth of advertising space and technical services for the Corps in one year.⁹⁷

Cadet Nurse Corps recruitment revolved around the presentation of eight substantial incentives--(1) training for a career; (2) a lifetime education—free; (3) an accelerated period of training; (4) a paid nursing assignment earlier; (5) an official uniform for optional wear; (6) national identification with war services; (7) girls could enter at the ages of seventeen and eighteen, younger than any branches of the military services; (8) student nurses serve while they learn.⁹⁸ These incentives were used to gain young women’s attention, but other issues were addressed in order to further persuade young women to join the Corps.

Advertisers emphasized several larger themes to attract young women to join the Corps. They emphasized that nursing was a lifetime career if one wished, and unlike most war jobs for women, nursing was a profession and career that women could continue to pursue after the war. Not only did advertisers emphasize that nursing was a “proud profession,” but nursing was also one of the best paid and most respectable professions for women. Advertisers stressed the “rare and valuable” opportunity that women received as they gained a free education, as well as

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ “Information Program for the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps,” Bolton MSS.

⁹⁷ United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 26.

⁹⁸ “Information Program for the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps,” Bolton MSS.

earning pay during nurse training.⁹⁹ But, advertisers had to convince both young women and their parents of the value of joining the Cadet Nurse Corps.

Advertisers feared that parents might have misconceptions about nursing as a career. Jean Henderson, chief recruitment and public relations head for the Cadet Nurse Corps, also recognized the negative misconceptions parents held of the nursing profession. Since parents viewed nursing as degrading work with inadequate compensation for the routine work performed, she, too, worried that these feelings might discourage seventeen- and eighteen-year-old women from performing war service.¹⁰⁰ Recruiters worried that some parents might feel nursing beneath their daughters' social status, or afraid the work might be disagreeable. Other parents worried that nursing as a career might take their daughters "out of circulation." All of these misconceptions needed to be answered. Advertisers addressed each of these issues by emphasizing the many opportunities that nurses received not only with proper training in a profession, but also socially.¹⁰¹

One of the major themes addressed in Corps recruitment materials was marriage. Combating the belief that nursing meant a life of solitude, publicity materials insisted that the "marriage rate among nurses is high."¹⁰² Married women could take advantage of Corps benefits, but equally important was making a connection between the profession of nursing and marriage. Literature declared that nursing was the best preparation for marriage, motherhood, and homemaking. In order to discount the belief that nursing took young women "out of

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Robinson & Perry, *Cadet Nurse Stories*, 33.

¹⁰¹ "Information Program for the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps," Bolton MSS; United States, *How Advertisers Can Cooperate with the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps*, Government Documents Louisiana State University.

¹⁰² United States, *Get free training with pay with the world's proudest profession*, Louisiana State University Library Government Documents.

circulation,” recruiters stressed that nursing developed the individual and argued that “many qualities which nursing develop in a woman are those most admired and respected by men.” They also emphasized that a higher percentage of nurses married than in any other women’s professional group.¹⁰³ Frances Bolton also addressed the issue of marriage in a 1943 radio interview, echoing the sentiment that nursing provided the best preparation for marriage.¹⁰⁴ In 1943 only nine percent of Americans believed a single person could be happy, suggesting the power that promises of marriage could have in indicting young women to join the Corps.¹⁰⁵

While the Cadet Nurse Corps retained its appeals to the social consensus of the time, it also progressively emphasized salaries and nursing’s ability to assure financial independence. Providing essential healthcare services for the men fighting the war presented women with the prospect of finding meaning and fulfillment in their own lives; at the same time, advertisers encouraged women to enter the workforce in a profession that offered social and financial benefits. Corps publicity mentioned salaries ranging from \$6,000 to \$7,500 per year in public health, executive nursing school and hospital positions, as well as in community and industrial health work. Other materials stressed the financial independence of nursing and its ability to augment the family income.¹⁰⁶

The media campaign to recruit student nurses was progressive in its attempts to attract women by both promoting the unmatched educational benefits the Corps provided and suggesting an image of nurses and the nursing profession that women might strive to achieve. In

¹⁰³ “Information Program for the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps,” Bolton MSS.

¹⁰⁴ Frances Payne Bolton, “Interview with Rep. Frances Payne Bolton of Ohio by Mary Mason,” Bolton MSS.

¹⁰⁵ Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 179.

¹⁰⁶ United States, *Get free training with pay with the world’s proudest profession*, Government Documents Louisiana State University Library; “Information Program for the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps,” Bolton MSS.

the campaign's attempts to appeal to the broadest audience possible, materials reinforced the values of both traditional and liberal mindsets. While it was possible for a young woman to start a career and become financially independent, the Corps was also an opportunity for future homemakers to gain nursing skills. Overall, the Corps' media recruitment campaign was designed to mobilize and incorporate as many young women as possible into the future workforce.

These themes were displayed across all forms of mass media. Radio was widely used to advertise and recruit for the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps. Bolton often provided interviews explaining the Corps and the benefits it provided student nurses as well as the war effort. The first national formal induction ceremony held in Washington, DC, was aired on the radio, and stars such as Bing Crosby and Academy Award winner Helen Hayes participated in the event which certainly drew attention to the Corps.¹⁰⁷ Broadcast income rose by about 125 percent in the years 1942 to 1944; and almost ninety percent of Americans owned radios in their homes.¹⁰⁸ Radio was certainly the most convenient way to ensure the American public learned about the Cadet Nurse Corps and what it offered.

Colored pamphlets presented an appealing image of the Cadet Nurse Corps. Young women wearing outdoor uniforms were prominently displayed on covers and Cadet nurses were shown working in various nursing specialties. Pamphlets and leaflets were placed in high schools, schools of nursing, drug stores, and physician's offices, as well as on buses and street cars.¹⁰⁹ Each carried the various themes of the Cadet Nurse Corps highlighting the free

¹⁰⁷ Robinson and Perry, *Cadet Nurse Stories*, 56-57

¹⁰⁸ Michael Renov, *Hollywood's Wartime Women: Representation and Ideology* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1998), 29. Emily Yellin, *Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 78.

¹⁰⁹ Robinson, *Your Country Needs You*, 66.

education and the invaluable opportunities being offered young women to receive a career and a stipend while fulfilling their war work duties.



Figure 4: 1943 US Cadet Nurse Corps recruiting poster; 1944 US Cadet Nurse Corps recruiting poster. *Source:* Northwestern University Library: World War II Poster Collection, Evanston, IL

Another successful tactic was the use of the National Nursing Council's clearing bureau which had been in operation since 1941. In 1942, the center had handled an estimated 79,783 inquiries. Box 88, New York City, was already an established center of information for nurses and was prominently displayed on all Cadet Nurse Corps publicity materials. This address provided women with a specific location to direct their questions and requests for more information concerning federal aid, the Public Health Service, and the Cadet Nurse Corp.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ United States Federal Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps [1943-1948]*, 27.

The visual component that posters offered in attracting students was essential. Posters distributed by the OWI were displayed in places of business which guaranteed to garner young women's attentions, and the visual image of beauty that posters displayed suggested that this would be the lifestyle of any woman who joined the Corps. Dorothe Melvin Crowley recalls writing in for information about the Corps because she wanted to be like the "smart looking girl on the poster."¹¹¹ Posters offered head turning images as well as slogans including--"A Lifetime Education--Free!," "Enlist in a Proud Profession," and "Save his life...and find your own."¹¹²

Magazines and newspapers were yet another means to reach women. The *New York Times* ran news articles as well as photographs of the Cadet Nurse Corps uniforms to pique readers' interest in the program. The government used magazines, specifically, to present programs and messages to women. Advertisements were primarily placed in women's magazines, and magazine advertisements allowed the Corps to target women more readily.¹¹³ Advertisements were placed in *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Harper's Bazaar*--some of the most-read periodicals by women during wartime; an estimated sixteen million people read about the Cadet Nurse Corps in magazines.¹¹⁴ The *Ladies Home Journal* alone reached over four million readers.¹¹⁵ Magazine depictions of Cadet Nurses convinced Dorothy Preusser Ringsbach to join the Corps. She recalled, "When I

¹¹¹ Robinson and Perry, *Cadet Nurse Stories*, 38.

¹¹² Carolyn Moorhead Edmundson, *Enlist in a proud profession! : join the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps : a lifetime education-- free!* Washington, D.C., USGPO: 1943; *Save his life--and find your own : be a nurse*, Washington, D.C., USGPO: 1943. Northwestern University Library: World War II Poster Collection.

¹¹³ Yellin, *Our Mothers' War*, 25.

¹¹⁴ United States Federal Security Agency, *The United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 30.

¹¹⁵ Yellin, *Our Mothers' War*, 25.

saw magazine pictures of Cadet nurses, I thought, ‘What a way to go.’ With the war on, this was one way I could serve my country, get an education, and wear that beautiful uniform.”¹¹⁶

Magazine advertising reached a new level in donated advertisements, and the Corps received large donations from various sponsors. The Eastman-Kodak Company cooperated with the WAC to sponsor full-page ads that were placed in fifteen magazines and reached a circulation of some twelve million.¹¹⁷ The ad showed a young woman dressed in a Cadet Nurse Corps uniform as her parents explained, “We feel awfully good about Mary’s joining the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps.” The Corps hoped to retain sponsorship that presented the Corps well, but occasionally a magazine or newspaper advertisement was sponsored by a liquor or cigarette company, to the dismay of the Division of Nurse Education. Lucile Petry recalled an incident in which the Surgeon General’s office received word that the Corps had a cooperative advertisement with Southern Comfort. Upon further investigation, Petry learned that the publicist from the region allegedly claimed she did not know Southern Comfort was a whiskey--she thought it was a mattress.¹¹⁸

The Nurse Training Act of 1943 stipulated that there would be no discrimination based on “race, color, or creed.” The recruitment of African-American Cadet nurses mainly focused on news articles in prominent African-American newspapers, in addition to college campus tours. Little of the Cadet Nurse Corps recruitment literature stated in so many words that African-Americans were allowed to join the Corps, but pamphlets often contained at least one

¹¹⁶ Robinson and Perry, *Cadet Nurse Stories*, 37.

¹¹⁷ Robinson, *Your Country Needs You*, 66.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 67; Robinson and Perry, *Cadet Nurse Stories*, 35.

photograph of African-Americans enrolling in the Corps.¹¹⁹ Certain forms of advertising focused specifically on an African-American audience.



Figure 5. Advertising in *The Crisis*, 1944. Source: Maureen Honey, *Bitterfruit*; Advertising in *The Chicago Defender*, 1944. Source: African-American Newspapers, 1827-1988, LSU Libraries Database

Advertisements were placed in African-American magazines and newspapers. Especially notable is that Corps advertisements were placed in *The Crisis*, the magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Although some artwork was in no way modified to suggest young African-American women, the fact that they were placed in a prominent African-American magazine is significant. The Corps was actively advertising to an

¹¹⁹ United States, U.S. Public Health Service and Federal Security Agency, *Get free training with pay with the world's proudest profession: join the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps*, November 5, 1943 (Washington: GPO, 1943), Louisiana State University Library Government Documents.

African-American readership, urging middle-class citizens to take advantage of the program's benefits.¹²⁰ Other advertisements were modified to appeal to young African-American women, particularly the one found in *The Chicago Defender*, where the models were African-American women. African-American newspapers presented stories on the Cadet Nurse Corps including the adoption of the "natty uniform," the first African-American women to enroll in the Corps, African-American Cadets training at twenty-six schools, an African-American nurse modeling the uniform, and simple Corps advertisements.¹²¹

High profile African-Americans also helped recruit for the Corps. Ellen Motten, then star of "Bess" in Broadway's revival of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, helped bring attention to the Corps as she worked with the National Nursing Council and accepted membership on the Council's Coordinating Committee on Negro Nurses.¹²² Other newspapers displayed headlines titled "Professional Opportunities Avail Negro Women" and ran large ads explaining the Corps, including five African-American Cadet nurses at work in their home hospitals.¹²³ Others ran cartoons depicting women at work with titles "Now More Than Ever" to emphasize the need of African-American Cadet nurses.¹²⁴ They also proudly displayed fifty African-American student

¹²⁰ Maureen Honey, ed. *Bitter Fruit: African American Women in World War II* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 116.

¹²¹ "U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps To Have Natty Uniforms," *The Chicago Defender* (National edition), September 4, 1943, 17, African-American Newspapers, 1827-1988, LSU Libraries Database; "First Enrollee in Cadet Nurse Corps," *The Chicago Defender*, September 4, 1943, 20; "Nurses Train At 26 Schools for Cadet Corps Unit," *The Chicago Defender*, November 6, 1943, 5; "New Nurse Cadet Uniform," *The Chicago Defender*, August 28, 1943, 2; "Smartly-uniformed Cadet Nurses," *The Chicago Defender*, June 16, 1945, 13; "U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps at Hampton Institute," *The Chicago Defender*, July 7, 1945, 2;

¹²² "Luck to the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps," *Plain Dealer*, October 22, 1943, Vol 45, Issue 41.

¹²³ "Professional Opportunities Avail Negro Women," *Arkansas State Press*, August 3, 1945, 4; *Arkansas State Press*, July 20, 1945, 8.

¹²⁴ "Now More Than Ever," *Arkansas State Press*, July 21, 1944, 6.

nurses who participated in the national U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps induction ceremony that took place in Washington, DC.¹²⁵

Another recruiting aspect for African-American women included college tours. Registered nurses toured African-American colleges across the nation to explain career opportunities provided by African-Americans. Young African-American women who had already graduated from nursing school and were registered nurses with a special interest in public health nursing helped in this endeavor. Recruitment specifically targeted the South. A consultant on African-American nurse education for the Corps toured twenty colleges and universities in seven southern and border states to inform African-Americans of the advantages provided them by the Corps.¹²⁶

The Cadet Nurse Corps media campaign proved to be one of the most successful recruitment campaigns of the war. By the war's end, the cost of recruiting each Cadet came to a total of \$92, of which \$87 represented donated space and advertising service.¹²⁷ Through the use of film, radio, and print-advertising, a massive campaign was underway to inform young women about the Corps and persuade them that the opportunities provided were too good to ignore. Rubicam argued that while most recruitment campaigns of the war could not be measured, the success of the Cadet Nurse Corps could, as it realized its ambitious recruitment quota of 65,000 women by 1944 and continued to consistently fulfill student nurse recruitment numbers.¹²⁸ Advertisers felt the results demonstrated their understanding of the Corps' intended audience and the methods necessary to catch its interest. While the recruitment campaign used a dynamic

¹²⁵ "Attend U.S. CNC Induction," *Arkansas State Press*, June 2, 1944, 1.

¹²⁶ "Recruiting for U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps," *Arkansas State Press*, October 29, 1943, 8; "Negro Nurse Consultant on Tour," *Arkansas State Press*, April 28, 1944, 1.

¹²⁷ Robinson, *Your Country Needs You*, 68, Beatrice J. Kalisch and Philip A. Kalisch, "Be A Cadet Nurse: The Girl with a Future," *Nursing Outlook* 21, no. 7 (July 1943), 449.

¹²⁸ Raymond Rubicam, "Advertising," in *While You Were Gone*, 428.

approach to attracting young women to the Cadet Nurse Corps, the Corps retained elements of the traditional social consensus. The Corps' approach to social equality, however, was anything but traditional.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE WARTIME REVOLUTION IN THE SOCIAL ORDER

In an oral history interview, Fanny Christina Hill, an African-American defense industry worker for North American Aircraft, stated, “The war made me live better, it really did. My sister always said that Hitler was the one that got us out of the white folks’ kitchen.”¹²⁶ The needs and demands of wartime allowed for greater racial equality, creating new possibilities for women and racial minorities. World War II initiated the civil rights movement of the 1960s. America made efforts to eliminate discrimination for the sake of national unity and national defense, enabling millions of disadvantaged citizens to take advantage of government benefits. African-Americans and Japanese Americans faced discrimination in the military, and on the home front, but advances gradually occurred. Though the nursing profession was deemed traditional, its actions concerning racial equality were highly progressive. The U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps, along with the support of professional nursing organizations, actively sought to challenge racial discrimination and segregation in both the training and employment of racial minorities.

The Cadet Nurse Corps promoted racial integration, offering equal treatment and opportunities to minority groups. While the Corps was a gender-driven wartime concern, it addressed many of the major policy shortcomings during World War II. Perhaps the most significant reflection of the postwar social changes is the language of the enabling legislation. An amendment to the bill was introduced by Senator Warren Barbour of New Jersey, providing that “there shall be no discrimination in the administration of the benefits and appropriations made under the respective provisions of this Act, on account of race, creed, or color.”¹²⁷ While most racial minorities experienced extreme discrimination in education and employment

¹²⁶ Sherna Berger Gluck, *Rosie the Riveter Revisited*, 23.

¹²⁷ *United States Statutes at Large*, Nurse Training Act of 1943, 153; “Training of Nurses,” *Congressional Record*, 78th Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 89, pt. 3: 5518; “D.C. Freedmen’s Hospital One of first in Nation to Get Nurses Cadet Corps,” *Chicago Defender*, August 14, 1943, 5.

practices, this legislation allowed all minority groups to take full advantage of Corps benefits, regardless of race. The fact that the language of the act contained this stipulation, rather than remaining an unspoken goal, made it a significant, previously unnoticed step toward assuring civil rights for African-Americans and serves as a precursor to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Perhaps the most instructive example of nursing's ability to promote progressive social change with little challenge from lawmakers is the Corps' legislative passage in June 1943 compared to lawmakers' treatment of the OWI's domestic budget during the same month. The OWI distributed an illustrated pamphlet, *Negroes and the War* created by Chandler Owen, a prominent African-American publicist, emphasizing the roles African-Americans played in both American society and World War II. Owen argued "there is still a long way to go before equality is attained, but the pace is faster, and never faster than now." In addition to commending African-Americans for their contributions to the war effort, the pamphlet also praised the Works Progress Administration and the National Youth Administration for providing assistance for African-Americans during the Depression.¹²⁸

Southern and Republican senators denounced the pamphlet and its publication by the OWI. Southern senators objected to the content and its challenge to the social order of a racially segregated Southern society. Northern Republicans also disagreed with the pamphlet's message and praise of New Deal policies; Republican Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts dismissed the pamphlet as partisan politics financed at taxpayer expense. The OWI promised to eliminate future publications that might contain controversial topics, but that did little to change the attitudes of lawmakers. On June 18, 1943, Southern and Republican representatives voted 218 to 114 to abolish appropriations for the OWI's domestic branch. The head of OWI, Elmer

¹²⁸ John Morton Blum, *V was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 41, 195.

Davis, threatened to resign; the Senate Appropriations Committee agreed to provide but \$3 million for the year 1944, to be used only for publications, films, or radio scripts.¹²⁹

The same month Congress slashed the OWI's domestic budget, Congress voted unanimously to pass U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps legislation, and President Roosevelt signed the bill into law the next month. Perhaps some Congressmen failed to realize the impact that the amendment including racial minorities might have. On the surface, the nursing profession seemed to offer little in the way of challenging the social order of the day. In reality, the amendment to the Cadet Nurse Corps law would allow some 2,600 African-American women to earn a free nursing education and receive benefits equal to their white counterparts.¹³⁰ The nursing profession, however, did not stop at offering equal treatment to women joining the Corps, but worked to help racial minorities gain greater access to equal training facilities and employment opportunities.

Some might argue that supporting the training of African-American nurses was simply another way to maintain segregation in public hospitals. Though certain statements alluded to educating African-American nurses for the treatment of the African-American population, this was not the program's intent. Some advocates argued that the African-American population totaled almost thirteen million, and the number of nurses was dangerously low in relation to the national need as well as within the African-American community.¹³¹ Educating African-American nurses for the sake of treating the African-American population was not the purpose of the amendment barring racial discrimination, especially given Frances Bolton's public involvement in African-American affairs, as well as the National Association for Colored

¹²⁹ John Morton Blum, *V was for Victory*, 41.

¹³⁰ United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 50.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

Graduate Nurses and the American Nurses Association's support for racial equality within the profession. Surgeon General Thomas Parran acknowledged the role that African-American Cadet nurses played in the war, stating that "by preparing to play a vital part in the post-war peace to come, they are making a lasting contribution to the advancement of the Negro race."¹³² Other statements, however, alluding to ensuring racial segregation reassured Southerners of the Cadet Nurse Corps' worth and necessity.

African-American leaders strongly encouraged young African-American women to take advantage of the Cadet nurse program. In a letter to Bolton, F. D. Patterson, president of Tuskegee Institute, called the Corps legislation "a great blessing to our efforts." Patterson thought that the "training of nurses should be the instrumentality through which this great blessing to our nation and to mankind becomes a reality."¹³³ African-American leaders were also pleased with the service the Corps provided African-American nurses. Claude Barnett, head of the Associated Negro Press, wrote that "with the crying need for nurses and with the proven efficiency of Negro nurses, one would think they might be used in all military hospitals everywhere regardless of race." He recognized that the Cadet Nurse Corps would help the shortage of nurses in military hospitals: "there are far more colored girls in training now than ever before and an excellent type is being drawn in."¹³⁴

African-American schools of nursing and hospitals were quick to take advantage of Cadet Nurse Corps benefits. Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, DC, was one of the only hospitals in the country under the jurisdiction of the United States Public Health Service with a nursing

¹³² "Atlanta Leads in Number of Cadet Student Nurses," *Chicago Defender*, January 29, 1944, 6.

¹³³ Letter from F. D. Patterson to Frances Bolton, September 29, 1943, Cont 90, Folder 1586, Bolton MMS.

¹³⁴ Letter from C. A. Barnett to Frances Bolton, June 15, 1944, Cont 9, Folder 1425, Bolton MMS.

school. This allowed Freedman's Hospital to become one of the first to allow its student nurses to take part in the Cadet Nurse Corps. Twenty-seven African-American nurses from Freedman's Hospital signed up for the Corps and became some of the first official members of the Cadet Nurse Corps.¹³⁵ Grady Memorial Hospital School of Nursing, Atlanta, Georgia, was the nation's leading African-American school of nursing as of January 1944, its school of nursing enrolling 172 students who took advantage of Corps benefits.¹³⁶

Unlike the military policies of the Army Nurse Corps and other branches of the military, Cadet Nurse Corps legislation allowed an unlimited number of African-Americans to take advantage of a free education. At the time of Pearl Harbor, there were no African-American nurses serving in any branch of the military; change occurred glacially. While public pressure favored a larger Army Nurse Corps quota, the Navy never went beyond a paper-promise: the Navy commissioned only four African-American nurses during World War II, one of whom remained in service until 1948.¹³⁷ The Army Nurse Corps established a quota of 52 African-American nurses in 1942. The Army Nurse Corps quotas continued to expand over the course of the war. By 1943, 156 were serving; in 1945, 300 served; and by the end of the war, 512 African-American nurses served in the Army Nurse Corps.¹³⁸ At the time it might have appeared that these quotas allowed African-Americans to participate in these military branches, but in reality it seemed a way to restrict their participation. Legislative measures, however, proved a

¹³⁵ "D.C. Freedmen's Hospital One of First in Nation to Get Nurses Cadet Corps," *Chicago Defender*, August 14, 1943, 5.

¹³⁶ "Atlanta Leads in Number of Cadet Student Nurses" *Chicago Defender*, January 29, 1944, 6.

¹³⁷ Mattie E. Treadwell, *United States Army in World War II: The Women's Army Corps, Special Studies* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1954), 589-592; Mary T. Sarnecky, *A History of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 269-272; "An American Challenge..." Cont 96, Folder 1688, Bolton MMS; "NACGN: four decades of service..." Cont 96, Folder 1688, Bolton MMS.

¹³⁸ "NACGN: four decades of service..." Bolton MMS.

successful way to ensure racial equality. By 1944 the Cadet Nurse Corps was funding the training for over 2,000 African-American members, the largest-ever group to enter nursing training.¹³⁹

The effects of addressing racial discrimination can be seen during the war as progress was made in desegregating not only the Cadet Nurse Corps, but hospitals and schools of nursing where Cadets worked and were educated. Hospitals which had been closed to African-Americans, for example, Philadelphia General Hospital, and Kings County Hospital and Cumberland Hospital in New York City, began accepting African-American patients. In 1943 the New York Commissioner of Hospitals ordered that no nursing school operated by New York City could refuse to admit African-Americans based on their race.¹⁴⁰ Though African-Americans and whites were treated in different wards, the fact that they were allowed in the same building represented a sharp departure from previous practice.

Schools of nursing also opened their doors to African-American students. The National Nursing Council initiated steps to integrate African-American nurses into the total war program; before the war it formed a specific division “to provide a better and wider use of the Negro nurse.” The division was directed by Estelle Massey Riddle, a member of the Advisory Committee of the Division of Nurse Education and a leader of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses. Both white and African-American nursing leaders believed that a better understanding and greater utilization of every nurse, regardless of race, would come from racially-integrated programs of training and hospital admissions.

¹³⁹ “Negro Students in the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps,” *The American Journal of Nursing* 44, no. 9 (September 1944), 887; “NACGN: four decades of service...,” Bolton MMS.

¹⁴⁰ Estelle Massey Riddle, “The Negro Nurse and the War,” *Opportunity* 21 (April 1943): 44-45; A. Russell Buchanan, *Black Americans in World War II* (Santa Barbara: Clio Books, 1977).

The enrollment of African-American students was not only increasing, but so were the institutions training both white and African-American students. In a national report conducted in 1944, Riddle observed that 1943 saw a twenty-one percent increase in African-American student nurses enrolled in schools of nursing; thirty-two schools were listed by the National League of Nursing Education, admitting 1,918 African-American students.¹⁴¹ The number of schools training both white and African-American students also increased. In 1941 only twenty-nine schools of nursing accepted and trained both white and African-American students; by the end of the war, the number had increased to forty-nine.¹⁴² The State Council in California reported that ten more schools established policies that allowed African-American nursing students to be admitted to their training programs. Catholic schools of nursing also expanded their enrollment to include the education of African-American women, and by June 1949 reported that some 48 percent of its hospitals across the country admitted African-Americans.¹⁴³ The ANA reported that during a ten-year period from 1939 to 1948, forty schools across the country revised their admission policies to accept students of all races; thirty-two schools made these changes during the years 1947 and 1948.¹⁴⁴

Not only did the profession of nursing and the Cadet Nurse Corps provide racial equality in education, but it also provided greater employment opportunities for African-American nurses. Boston City Hospital became one of the first northern institutions to admit African-American Cadet nurses when it accepted twelve students from Tuskegee Institute School of Nursing to complete their final six months of training. In a survey made by the Urban Colored

¹⁴¹ United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 49.

¹⁴² Robinson and Perry, *Cadet Nurse Stories*, 155; United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 49.

¹⁴³ "An American Challenge..." Bolton MMS.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Population Commission in New Jersey, 21 of 114 hospitals studied the employment of African-American nurses. Within a two-year period, 37 out of 85 hospitals had changed their policies to prevent discrimination against employed African-American graduate nurses.¹⁴⁵ While the War Department declared the Army followed “traditional patterns of civilian life in restricting and segregating Negro nursing enlistments,” Riddle emphasized the “pattern of civilian life indicates thousands of instances where Negro and white nurses work in close cooperation...Negro and white nurses work side by side at Harlem and Lincoln hospitals, at Bronx and Montiflori in New York and in dozens of small private hospitals.”¹⁴⁶ African-American nurses still faced challenges in the workplace. The war allowed young African-American women to enter the nursing profession, but they still faced barriers in finding employment. And even where African-Americans found employment, they were faced with unequal wages. In September 1943 the National Association of Colored Nurses encouraged the Fair Employment Practice Committee to investigate the wage differentials paid to African-Americans. African-American nurses performed the same type of work as their white coworkers with the same qualifications for lower wages.¹⁴⁷ African-American nurses faced other challenges in the workplace. Cadet Nurse Corps member Katie King remembered, with bitterness, having no proper medication in the African-American ward. Forced to go to the white ward for a specific medication, she had to wait until a white doctor traveled from the white ward, by which time the patient had died.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 51; “Nurses Train at 26 Schools for Cadet Corps Unit,” *Chicago Defender*, November 6, 1943, 5.

¹⁴⁷ National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses News-Letter, September 14, 1943, Cont 96, Folder 1687, Bolton MMS, 3.

¹⁴⁸ Katie Sawyer King, interview by Hermann Trojanowski, 2005, The Betty H. Carter Women Veterans Historical Project, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, North Carolina, <http://library.uncg.edu/dp/wv/results5.aspx?i=2726&s=5&b=7>.

The change which the Cadet Nurse Corps legislation provoked quickly spread. Professional nursing organizations that actively advertised for the Cadet Nurse Corps were also heavily involved in promoting greater racial equality in nurse training and employment-- particularly the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NACGN) and the American Nurses Association (ANA). The ANA worked closely with the NACGN, assisting the organization financially.¹⁴⁹

Many state nurses associations in the South did not accept the membership of African-Americans. This kept them from becoming members of the American Nurses Association where membership in the state organization was a constitutional requirement. The State Nurse Association of sixteen Southern states and Washington, DC, did not accept membership of approximately 4,500 African-Americans living in the South. With pressure from the NACGN, as well as within the ANA itself, in 1942 a number of states reversed this policy; many southern states followed suit. A 1948 amendment to the ANA constitution gave individual membership to the African-American nurses still barred by eight state associations and Washington, DC.¹⁵⁰ The NACGN claimed that “we can best gauge the great advances that have been made in the nursing field when we realize that no similar progress has been made in the American Medical Association, where colored physicians in eighteen states are still barred from membership.”¹⁵¹

While the NACGN stated that the organization “must carry on the campaign for democracy at the side of the sickbed,” the ANA stressed its “dedication to eliminating discrimination in the nursing profession.” In 1948’s “An American Challenge...,” the ANA

¹⁴⁹ “An American Challenge...,” Bolton MMS.

¹⁵⁰ “NACGN four decades of service...,” Bolton MMS; National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses News-Letter, Bolton MMS; “NACGN: four decades of service...,” Bolton MMS.

¹⁵¹ National Association of Colored Nurses News-Letter, Bolton MMS; “NACGN: four decades of service...,” Bolton MMS.

informed readers how they could help in eliminating racial discrimination. The pamphlet asked specific questions relating to race relations, including “Does the nursing profession practice the principles of democracy? Are all American women, regardless of race, color, or creed, free to study and practice nursing? Do all state nurses associations accept professional registered nurses as members regardless of race, color, or creed?” Finally, the ANA asked all of its members, “What can YOU do to help ANA extend membership to ALL professional registered nurses in the U.S. regardless of race, color, or creed?”¹⁵²

Within the ANA, a specific program was established to promote better race relations. The organization claimed the nursing profession was one of the first opened to women of all races, and vowed to strengthen democracy by promoting racial equality. The ANA’s Intergroup Relations Program worked specifically to advocate greater racial equality. Its mission was “to eliminate discrimination in job opportunity, salary or other working conditions where such conditions are found.” The Intergroup Relations Program also sought to integrate minority groups into the framework of ANA membership so that no professional registered nurse was barred from national service on the account of race. The ANA appealed to all professional registered nurses, urging them as “good American[s] you will want to help carry out this program.” Following the creation and adoption of the ANA’s Intergroup Relations Program, ten states removed racial restrictions from state and district nurse associations, which affected some 23,000 nurses.¹⁵³

Not only were African-American students able to earn a nursing education, but they also took advantage of the funding the Cadet Nurse Corps provided for graduate courses. Elouise Collier was employed for nine months by Merck and Company in New Jersey as a

¹⁵² “An American Challenge...,” Bolton MMS.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

manufacturing chemist before deciding to enter the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps. Collier was among some 1,800 students who applied to enter the May 1944 class at Yale University School of Nursing and one of eighty students accepted. Collier became the second African-American woman to be admitted to the Yale institute, and the first to graduate with a Master's degree in nursing after completing twenty-eight months of course work.¹⁵⁴ The Cadet Nurse Corps provided selected young African-American women with the opportunity to receive an elite graduate education.

African-Americans enjoyed limited gains through other wartime legislation. Facing pressure from African-American leadership, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802 to combat racial discrimination. The executive order, criticized for being all talk and no action, created the Fair Employment Practice Committee to prevent racial discrimination by race, creed, color, or country of origin in various defense industries. While it seemed the government made some effort to broaden civil liberties for racial minorities during wartime, other government actions contradicted these efforts.¹⁵⁵

African-Americans were not the only minority group that took advantage of Corps benefits. Japanese Americans also became members of the Corps, especially important for Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 targeted those of Japanese ancestry, particularly the Issei, or immigrant generation, and Nisei, first-generation Japanese Americans. The order allowed the government to force over 112,000 people of Japanese ancestry into internment camps where they were required to stay until the

¹⁵⁴ "New Jersey War Worker Becomes U.S. Cadet Nurse," *Chicago Defender*, May 27, 1944, 15; "Two Nurses Get Degrees from Yale," *The Afro American*, Baltimore, MD, July 6, 1946, 13.

¹⁵⁵ Carey McWilliams, "What We Did About Racial Minorities" in *While You Were Gone: A Report on Wartime Life in the United States*, ed. Jack Goodman (New York: Da Capo Press, 1946), 92-93, 95; Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parson, *The Home-Front War: World War II and American Society* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 164.

war's end.¹⁵⁶ Joining the Cadet Nurse Corps, however, enabled Nisei to escape life in internment camps and directly contradicted the provisions of the executive order. Not only did Japanese Americans escape government internment camps, but they received a free education at the government's expense.

Japanese Americans had experienced racial segregation throughout the twentieth century. Between 1900 and 1940 the population in the United States grew from 76 million to 130 million, but the ethnic Japanese population never reached 0.02 percent of the total population and made up only 2.1 percent of California's total population.¹⁵⁷ Only about 127,000 people of Japanese ancestry lived in the United States, making up 0.1 percent of the total population. Of the 127,000 most lived on the West Coast where they had experienced racial discrimination for years. Japanese immigrants were already legally barred from citizenship, and the Immigration Act of 1924 prohibited further immigration from Japan. Individuals of Japanese ancestry were prohibited by state laws from marrying whites and were legally excluded from white swimming pools and dance halls. They faced extralegal barriers to employment and certain middle-class housing districts, as well as owning property in some states like California.¹⁵⁸

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, infringement of civil liberties quickly increased. At the direction of President Roosevelt, the War Department drafted Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, authorizing the department to declare areas of the United States military areas in "which any or all persons may be excluded." After the order was signed, Secretary of War Henry Stimson assigned General John L. DeWitt, head of the newly created Western Defense Command, as the authority to create specific defense zones and remove civilians at his

¹⁵⁶ Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 3.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁵⁸ John Morton Blum, *V was for Victory*, 156.

discretion.¹⁵⁹ In March 1942 Roosevelt then signed Executive Order 9102 which created the War Relocation Authority (WRA) and assigned the authority four main responsibilities. The WRA was responsible for aiding the Army in evacuating designated military areas, developing and supervising a program of relocation for evacuees, providing evacuees with various work opportunities so they would provide for their own maintenance, and protecting evacuees from harm in their new areas of location.¹⁶⁰ While the war allowed for greater wartime equality for African-Americans, it also provided a proper opportunity for discrimination against those of Japanese ancestry.

The executive order mentioned no specific racial or ethnic group by name and did not specify an exact geographical location. The order simply gave the WRA authority to name “military areas” in which “any or all persons may be excluded” and was given in the name of “successful prosecution of the war” and later shortened to “military necessity.”¹⁶¹ It was clear that the order was intended for Japanese and American citizens of Japanese ancestry. Secretary of War Henry Stimson utilized the executive order only on the West Coast and exclusively against those of Japanese descent. Though a few alien Italian Americans and German Americans were forced to move out of “sensitive areas,” no American citizens of German or Italian ancestry experienced such extreme measures.¹⁶²

The first restrictions in established military zones regulated the daily lives of Japanese Americans, including a curfew from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. for all “enemy aliens” and “persons of

¹⁵⁹ Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 104; Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 30.

¹⁶⁰ Page Smith, *Democracy on Trial: The Japanese American Evacuation and Relocation in World War II* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 170.

¹⁶¹ Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 46.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 51.

Japanese ancestry.”¹⁶³ By April 1942 this simple restriction had escalated to government incarceration of thousands of Japanese Americans in internment camps. Issei and Nisei were forced to leave their homes and travel to one of fifteen “assembly centers.” They could bring only what they could carry and were ordered to provide their own bedding and linens, toiletries, clothing, dishes, utensils, and other personal effects. In addition, the Treasury Department froze bank accounts of Japanese in American banks, increasing the problems of Japanese being interned. Eventually families were allowed to withdraw a hundred dollars a month of their own money from the blocked accounts.¹⁶⁴

Under the direction of the War Relocation Authority, around 112,000 Japanese Americans were sent to receiving stations, or assembly centers, including converted race tracks, fair grounds, and stockyards.¹⁶⁵ The location of assembly centers varied, and centers were quickly converted to house evacuees. Assembly centers were often racetracks which had stalls converted to rooms. Fairgrounds had exhibition halls that could be used for dining halls, medical clinics, and other areas of necessity. From the assembly centers, the evacuees were then transferred to one of the ten permanent relocation centers, similar to the assembly center facilities, and often in remote, unpopulated areas.¹⁶⁶

President Roosevelt praised and honored the Works Progress Administration (WPA) for providing employment to millions of people across the country and providing economic relief during the Great Depression, but he did not acknowledge the service it provided following Pearl Harbor. In efforts to justify its existence, the WPA sought ways to contribute to the war effort on the home front. Between March and November 1942, it organized and staffed both assembly

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 51, 55.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁶⁵ John Morton Blum, *V was for Victory*, 155-159, 161.

¹⁶⁶ Page Smith, *Democracy on Trial*, 182; Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 155.

centers and relocation camps. It was responsible for the administration of the “reception and induction” of the Wartime Civilian Control Administration. During this time period the WPA spent about \$4.47 million on relocation and internment of Japanese Americans, more than any other civilian agency and slightly more than the Army itself. The WPA was in charge of “the location, planning, construction, and equipping of Reception Centers.”¹⁶⁷

Two-thirds of those interned were American citizens; most citizens forced into internment camps lost everything. In 1943 the American Civil Liberties Union defended Japanese Americans, declaring that “undoubtedly the worst single invasion of civil liberties under war pressures was the wholesale evacuation from the Pacific coast of over 70,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry.” The ACLU failed to include the other 50,000 Japanese immigrants who were also relocated from the West Coast. In December 1944 the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the procedure of mass evacuation as a proper use of power during wartime.¹⁶⁸ Conservative estimates placed losses at \$400 million; Congress appropriated a meager \$38 million to settle evacuee claims following the war.¹⁶⁹

The national animosity toward those of Japanese ancestry and the fear of disloyalty made large-scale release of Japanese Americans impossible before 1945. Some Japanese Americans, however, were able to escape life in the internment camps, following rules established by the WRA. Four separate groups were released from camps including students, farm workers,

¹⁶⁷ Jason Scott Smith, *Building New Deal Liberalism: the Political Economy of Public Works, 1933-1956* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 222, 224, 227.

¹⁶⁸ Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 4; Carey McWilliams, “What We Did About Racial Minorities” in *While You Were Gone*, 109; Geoffrey Perret, *Days of Sadness Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 357.

¹⁶⁹ Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 126.

Japanese linguists, and those exchanged with Japan in diplomatic efforts.¹⁷⁰ The applicant had to prove he had a definite job offer or other means for support; agree to keep the WRA informed of any employment or address changes; demonstrate his or her relocation center and the FBI contained no evidence of disloyalty; and provide reasonable proof that his presence would be acceptable to the new community.¹⁷¹

Within the facility minimal employment was provided. Non-skilled workers were paid \$12 a month; skilled workers received from \$16 to \$19 per month. A total of 27,000 evacuees were employed, or about 30 percent of the total population in assembly centers. Because of the nursing shortage within the camps themselves, a program was initiated to train young women as nurses' aides in "medical nursing, dental and dietetic duties." They enrolled in both lectures and classes, including instruction in nursing aide procedures, bed-making, nursing ethics, health and hygiene, nutrition and diets, medication, hot and cold applications, communicable diseases, and infant and maternity care.¹⁷² Many of the young women who entered the Cadet Nurse Corps began as nurses' aides in relocation centers. They were later accepted into schools of nursing throughout the country; their monthly stipends helped their families who remained interned.

Sumiko "Sammie" Itoi Brinsfield was in high school when her family was taken to Puyallup Assembly Center in Washington state and later transferred to Minidoka Relocation Center, Twin Falls, Idaho. She received her high school diploma in the relocation center and signed up for classes to become a nurse's aide. Several months later, evacuees were given permission to leave as long as they did not return to the West Coast. Sammie went to Indianapolis, Indiana, where she used her skills as a nurse's aide to find a job. After learning

¹⁷⁰ Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 72-76.

¹⁷¹ Page Smith, *Democracy on Trial*, 223-224.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 188-189, 200.

about the Cadet Nurse Corps, she was accepted by Adelphi College School of Nursing on Long Island, New York. As she recalls, “My thoughts were always with my parents interned in camp. My Cadet nurse stipend of \$20 a month made it possible to send food and clothing to them from time to time.”¹⁷³

The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council helped young Japanese Americans find schools to attend and thereby leave the internment camps. The Student Relocation Council was established in the summer of 1942 by the American Friends Service Committee at the request of the WRA, with the approval of the War Department and also included other institutions such as the Pacific College Association and the Student YMCA and YWCA. A student wrote to the organization; once accepted into a school, the next step included finding financial funding. Of the first 1,400 students who qualified for relocation through the Council, only twenty percent had funds to pay their own way. The Student Relocation Council often relied on personal acquaintances at universities.¹⁷⁴

In October 1943 the *American Journal of Nursing* reported that only twenty schools accepted American students of Japanese ancestry. Of the 371 young women wishing to enter schools of nursing or to complete their training, only eighty-four had been able to do so. The *American Journal of Nursing* urged that schools of nursing accept students of Japanese ancestry, citing patriotic pro-American testimonials such as one woman who wrote, “I am an American of Japanese ancestry and one cannot choose one’s ancestors.” They also reported “the girls want to be normal, they want to prove to the world that they are loyal, everyday Americans. Their right

¹⁷³ Thelma Robinson, *Your Country Needs You*, 38-39

¹⁷⁴ “The Problem of Student Nurses of Japanese Ancestry,” *American Journal of Nursing* 43, no. 10 (October 1943), 895; Page Smith, *Democracy on Trial*, 227, 230.

to an American citizen's opportunity cannot be denied. To the student of Japanese ancestry this means 'relocation.'"¹⁷⁵

During 1942 the National Nursing Council and the National League of Nursing Education, along with the Student Relocation Council, approached a number of nursing schools asking if they would accept Japanese American students. The *Journal* named the schools that declined, with varying reasons. Typical responses included such excuses as the hospital board or university administration refused Japanese American students admission; the institution had not received the proper clearances from federal departments; the school had admitted refugee students and did not feel it could accommodate Japanese American students; facilities were already overcrowded; and difficulties might arise when students worked with the public in nursing wards. The *Journal* noted that schools of nursing which accepted students of Japanese ancestry received favorable reports from doctors, patients, and fellow student nurses.¹⁷⁶

The Student Relocation Council handled the placement of students for schools willing to accept students of Japanese ancestry. The Council collected student credentials and submitted them to these schools. The school reserved the right to select from applicants as they did for other applicants. Before a student left a relocation center, individual records were checked. Acquiring funding was the final step.¹⁷⁷ Even if Japanese Americans planned to travel to school, finances were often a problem.

The *American Journal of Nursing* insisted it was not the purpose of the magazine to urge schools of nursing to accept Japanese Americans, but insisted it was placing facts before readers

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 895.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 896.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

and urged “careful, unbiased, and imaginative study” of the situation. The editors ended one editorial by quoting President Roosevelt, who had signed the 1942 Executive Order:

The principle on which this country is founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is a matter of the mind and the heart: Americanism is not and never was a matter of race or ancestry. A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed of liberty and democracy. Every loyal American citizen should be given the opportunity to serve this country wherever his skill will make the greatest contribution.¹⁷⁸

Many schools of nursing accepted Japanese American students for the first time during World War II; successful students often led schools to accept others. May Kurose Joichii was twenty years old and enrolled in the University of Washington School of Nursing when restrictions were imposed on Japanese Americans. Before curfew took place in Seattle, Joichii’s parents decided she should finish school in Chicago, so she enrolled in Mercy Hospital School of Nursing. She recalls Sister Mary Therese explaining to her that if she did well, more Japanese Americans would be admitted to the program. At least four more students were accepted in classes that followed. Joichii recalls wearing her Cadet nurse uniform when visiting her parents in a relocation camp, and she went on to pursue further training and received certification in Operating Room Technique and Supervision at Yale University School of Nursing.¹⁷⁹

The U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps provided a way for young Japanese American women to escape internment camps and also allowed them to receive a paid education, financial assistance, and the same benefits as many other young women across the nation. By 1944 Nisei women attended 100 schools of nursing in twenty-four states throughout the country, and nearly all were enrolled in the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Thelma M. Robinson, *Nisei Cadet Nurse of World War II: Patriotism in Spite of Prejudice* (Boulder, Colorado: Black Swan Mill Press, 2005), 33-34.

¹⁸⁰ Page Smith, *Democracy on Trial*, 236.

Financial funding was the greatest challenge to most students looking to leave internment camps to receive an education, but the Cadet Nurse Corps helped solve that difficulty. Margaret Bab Yasuda and her family were first interned at Puyallup Assembly Center in Washington, and her family was eventually moved to the Minidoka Relocation Center in Idaho. She recalls wanting to enter nursing school, but worried about how she would pay tuition. She began writing to the State Boards of Nursing for a list of nursing schools, and in March 1943 she received a letter of acceptance from Seton School of Nursing, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Yasuda was one of the few Japanese Americans who was able to fund her tuition until she joined the Cadet Nurse Corps in 1943, after which her expenses were paid.¹⁸¹

Others, however, were forced to put their education on hold until they were able to pay tuition. Mikeyko “Mickey” Hayano Hara was one of seven children in western Nebraska where her parents were farmers in the Platte River Valley. She was seventeen when Pearl Harbor was bombed, and upon graduation from high school, received a scholarship to the University of Nebraska. Her family, however, could not afford to pay the other expenses, so Mickey worked on the farm and planned to join the Women’s Army Corps. She learned from a friend about the Cadet Nurse Corps, which could pay her way for nursing school. She was accepted at the small Catholic school of nursing in Colorado Springs, Colorado, Seton School of Nursing, where she completed her nursing education with financial assistance from the Corps. Katsuko Kato Odanaka graduated from Manzanar High School in the Manaznar Relocation Center, California, took the nurse’s aide training program, and worked at the center hospital. After she obtained a security clearance, she traveled to Chicago to pursue a nursing career. In July 1945 she was accepted by the Evangelical Deaconess Hospital School of Nursing in Chicago and joined the

¹⁸¹ Thelma Robinson, *Nisei Cadet Nurse of World War II, 19-22*

Cadet Nurse Corps. In an oral history interview she stated, “I will always be grateful for the Cadet Nurse Corps for paying my nursing school expenses as my parents were still in camp and unable to help me financially.”¹⁸²

The Cadet Nurse Corps provided Nisei women with an opportunity to escape the internment camps, receive an education, and fulfill a sense of American patriotism. Nisei women were able to visibly do their part in the war effort and show their dedication to their country. As Sharon Tanagi Aburano recalled, “the uniform stood for patriotism, and I was proud to show that I was serving my country.”¹⁸³ The uniform proved to be as much a distinguishing factor for racial minorities as it was for the other Cadet Nurse Corps members across the country.

The Cadet Nurse Corps also helped restore young Japanese Americans’ faith in the American government. Suzu Shimizu Kunitani grew up in the rural area near Centerville, California, where her parents owned an orchard. She enrolled in the University of California School of Nursing, but eight months into her training, she and her family were ordered to leave the West Coast. They were bused to Tanforan Assembly Center near San Francisco and later moved to Manzanar Relocation Center. She recalls being assigned as the floor nurse in the Manzanar Hospital with only eight months in basic nurse training. When Kunitani learned that she could leave camp provided she had a plan for relocation, she began writing to nursing schools. She was accepted by the University of Colorado School of Nursing, joined the Cadet Nurse Corps, and was able to continue her education including a bachelor’s degree in science. Kunitani recalled, “The Cadet Nurse Corps restored some of my faith and trust in the U.S.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 12-14, 71-75.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 128.

government. I suppose if the war had continued and the government had wanted me to serve in the armed forces, I would have been willing to do so.¹⁸⁴

The opportunity the Cadet Nurse Corps provided Japanese American women was in direct conflict with the purpose of Executive Order 9066 which sought to restrict Japanese Americans to specific areas. The Corps enabled more than 350 Japanese American women to escape internment camps and receive full benefits of a free education which the Corps provided.¹⁸⁵ In addition to serving in public hospitals following their training, Japanese American Cadet nurses also served in military hospitals. By allowing Japanese Americans to become Corps members, the program addressed societal fears of subversion while providing these women full rights as United States citizens.

Aiko “Grace” Obata Amemiya had completed the pre-nursing program at the University of California at Berkeley in 1938, and in 1941 continued her nursing education at the University of California School of Nursing. Executive Order 9066 forced Amemiya and her family to relocate in May 1942, first to Turlock Assembly Center in California, and eventually to Gila River Relocation Center in Arizona. Unable to continue her education while detained in the camp, Amemiya worked as a nurse’s aide until February 1943 when she was accepted by St. Mary’s School of Nursing, Rochester, Minnesota. Acceptance into a school of nursing qualified Amemiya to join the Cadet Nurse Corps where she was able to take full advantage of the educational benefits. Following her training she worked at Schick General Army Hospital in Clinton, Iowa.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 101-103.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, xii.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 137-141.

Only a total of 17,000 Japanese were allowed to leave the camps during 1943, less than fifteen percent of the total, and a similar number were allowed to resettle in 1944.¹⁸⁷ The Cadet Nurse Corps was instrumental in helping young Japanese American women escape the internment camps. Progressive congressional legislation allowed racial minorities, often marginalized, to take full advantage of the Cadet Nurse Corps benefits. By allowing them equal access to funding for higher education, it fostered a more racially-integrated educational and health care system while also providing the public with greater access to health care. While the Cadet Nurse Corps helped African-American women achieve greater educational opportunities and claim newfound territory in the fight for racial equality, it also provided Japanese Americans with a way to reclaim civil liberties denied by executive order. The Corps provided thousands of women of color with the opportunity for an education and placed them on an equal basis with their white counterparts. While the Corps' progressive stance concerning race relations and equality was important, so, too was its mission to provide all women, regardless of color, with greater social equality.

¹⁸⁷ Greg Robinson, *Prisoners Without War*, 187.

CHAPTER FIVE: A SOCIAL REVOLUTION FOR WOMEN

The American Nurses Association proudly declared that the profession of nursing “pioneered establishing equality between the sexes.”¹⁸⁹ The social revolution for women during World War II has often focused on the millions of women taking industrial or “non-traditional” jobs; however, within a traditionally feminine profession, the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps and the nursing profession were able to promote greater social equality for women across the nation. The Corps, in a time of national emergency, implemented progressive policies that helped remove the social and economic barriers which women faced.

Before the war, discrimination in the workplace limited women’s participation in the world outside of the home, and women’s responsibilities were largely domestic. Those who worked outside the home found the labor system was segregated by gender. Secondary school teaching was one of the few areas in which both men and women did the same work. In fields such as education, health care, and even clerical work, women were seen as performing feminine, wifely, and motherly functions. In all of these jobs, opportunities for advancement were limited. Low wages were normal; the traditional belief that women belonged in the home rather than in the workplace contributed to low rates of pay. World War II began changing women’s position in American society. The popular idea that women’s primary roles remained in the home survived the war, but the wartime crisis promoted women’s entrance into the public realm.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ “An American Challenge...,” Bolton MSS.

¹⁹⁰ Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 16, 19-20.

World War II brought millions of women who had previously remained in the home into the workforce. In 1940 the percentage of women at work was not much greater than in 1910.¹⁹¹ At the beginning of the war, twenty-nine percent of women fourteen and over were either in uniform or working; the remaining seventy-one percent remained at home.¹⁹² As men prepared to fight overseas, women were recruited to fill their places in factories throughout the country. Wartime demands meant women took on traditionally masculine jobs such as riveting, running assembly lines, and performing other war industry-related tasks. These jobs usually paid higher wages and proved an important step in expanding women's economic power. Though these were novel positions of employment for women and challenged the social consensus, traditional images of femininity were not ignored. Conservatives emphasized the manual dexterity, attention to details, and other "feminine" qualities that made women suitable for industrial employment.¹⁹³

Industrial jobs were not the only forms of employment open to females entering the work force. So were jobs traditionally associated with women, such as health care, education, and clerical work. Though women moved into the public sphere, retaining the traditional feminine characteristics as well as their traditional family roles seemed most important.¹⁹⁴ These characteristics were often most visible in traditionally female work and more easily fulfilled the traditional consensus as to what constituted an appropriate job for a woman.

¹⁹¹ William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 135.

¹⁹² Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 259.

¹⁹³ William Henry Chafe, *The Paradox of Change: American Women in the 20th Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 124.

¹⁹⁴ Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 23.

By the 1940s, nursing had long been considered an occupation best-suited for women. Nurses in the Cadet Nurse Corps were not challenging the traditional sexual order, but tried to equate the importance of nursing with new, more exciting opportunities for female employment in industry. In a 1945 editorial of the *Cadet Nurse Corps News*, the Corps acknowledged that “in a world currently given over to destruction, the nurse stands out--significantly--as a constructive force. While other young men and women build planes and tanks, toss grenades, plant mines, or learn the intricacies of a bomb sight, she carries on the greatest constructive task in the world--saving and rebuilding human bodies and minds.”¹⁹⁵ In order to reiterate the necessity of nurses, connecting the profession to other wartime employment was necessary.

Though scholars might not see startling advances for women into new professions, women occupying traditionally feminine professions advanced women’s status. Nursing underscored the traditional roles of women in society, but this did not stop their efforts to bring greater equality to women. Nursing was able to promote equality without antagonizing the traditional social consensus. Few would have ever expected nurses to take progressive or radical stances on social issues.

The nursing profession, itself, was committed to promoting gender equality. An American Nurse Association pamphlet entitled “An American Challenge...,” first expressed the ANA’s policy toward equality. The pamphlet quoted the Declaration of Independence (“all men are created equal”), expanding equality to women. “Today, when women vote, hold government office, engage in business and practice professions, this means all women, too, are created equal.” The ANA pointed out that the nursing profession and nurses led the way in establishing

¹⁹⁵ Cadet Nurse Corps News, Editorial, Vol. 1 (3):2, July 1945 in Thelma Robinson, *Your Country Needs You*, 143.

sexual equality and supported their argument by acknowledging that the nursing profession was among the first professions opened to women.¹⁹⁶

Nurses were one of the best-paid female professions at the time and offered greater economic equality. The war economy allowed not only women who worked in industry to receive higher incomes, but also those who worked in what was considered a woman's domain. Because of the general labor shortage, women's earnings increased even in traditional professions.¹⁹⁷ As the demand for qualified nurses increased, so did their opportunity to earn better wages as well as student-nurses to receive monthly stipends to cover living expenses while earning their degrees.

The Cadet Nurse Corps offered young women the ability to earn a high salary and emphasized the potential for young women to become financially independent. The highest nursing salaries were for those working in Public Health nursing or other civilian sectors; the lowest for those employed by the armed forces. The base salary for Public Health nurses was \$6,000; the lowest salary for a nurse in any sector of work was \$4,500.¹⁹⁸ These were sizable incomes, especially considering that in 1942 the average income per family in large cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York ranged from \$3,500 to \$4,000 per year.¹⁹⁹ Ideally women no longer needed to marry and rely on a husband's income, but through a free nursing education obtained the opportunity for financial freedom.

The United States was becoming a middle-class nation. In 1941 the median income was around \$2,000 a year. Though there were still vast distinctions between the rich and the poor, by 1945 the distribution of family incomes became more evenly distributed. Twenty percent of all

¹⁹⁶ "An American Challenge..." Bolton MSS.

¹⁹⁷ Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 21

¹⁹⁸ "Information Program for the United States Cadet Nurse Corps," Bolton MSS.

¹⁹⁹ John Morton Blum, *V was for Victory*, 9.

families averaged \$2,000-\$2,999; another twenty percent averaged \$3,000-\$3,999. The share of the top five percent dropped to 18 percent of the national income.²⁰⁰ A Cadet Nurse Corps graduate with a college education and specialized training could earn from \$5,000 to \$7,500 a year.²⁰¹

Wartime provided women with better opportunities in both education and employment. A Department of Labor Women's Bureau survey showed that two-thirds of women who held jobs in eating and drinking establishments at the beginning of the war had transferred to another area of work by the war's end. The survey also reported that in 1942 over six hundred laundries were forced to close because they were unable to find women willing to wash clothes and run steam irons.²⁰² Given employment shortages in a multitude of occupations, women received greater freedom of choice in choosing employment.

Although the war expanded job opportunities for women and added more choices in forms of employment, most women viewed work as a job instead of a career.²⁰³ The Cadet Nurse Corps, however, emphasized that nursing was not simply a war job. It focused on nursing as a career with long-term potential. A nursing education "would reap rewards not only for the duration of the present conflict but in the years of reconstruction and peace to follow" and provided women with an opportunity "to prepare for a secure and important profession tomorrow."²⁰⁴ Nursing was a profession with a future.

²⁰⁰ Richard Lingeman, *Don't You Know There's a War On?*, 13; Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph*, 354.

²⁰¹ "Information Program for the United States Cadet Nurse Corps," Bolton MSS.

²⁰² William Chafe, *The American Woman*, 142.

²⁰³ Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 95.

²⁰⁴ United States, *How Advertisers Can Cooperate with the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps*, Government Documents Louisiana State University.

A nursing education also provided women with more career options. The Corps recognized that a nursing education prepared young women “for a professional life that gives you a wide choice of interesting work.”²⁰⁵ It was most common for graduate registered nurses to work in hospitals, but it was also possible to take on jobs with more responsibility if one had the proper education. Graduate nurses had the potential to become hospital directors or instructors or directors at schools of nursing. With specialized training, women could enter health care specialties such as anesthesia, pediatrics, and physiotherapy.²⁰⁶ The Corps also claimed that nursing and nursing education provided experience in dealing with people which taught skills of resourcefulness, responsibility, and initiative. These skills, along with those of a nursing education, also allowed qualified women to become airline stewardesses.²⁰⁷ Nursing offered different types of careers within the nursing profession including administrative, educational, community organization, and specialized services such as industrial, public health and institutional.²⁰⁸

After the war, industry management went to great lengths to eliminate women from working in the auto plants and other high-paying non-traditional jobs. Women were often downgraded to lower paying “female” jobs including clerical and service work.²⁰⁹ No so for nurses. As thousands of soldiers returned to the home front, nurses would be needed to help rehabilitate and care for the population. Stella Goostray, President of the National League of Nursing Education, looked to the future in 1943, arguing that “nursing will be one of the most

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ United States, *Get free training with pay with the world's proudest profession*, Louisiana State University Library Government Documents; United States, *Get free training with pay with the world's proudest profession* < <http://www.archive.org/details/U.s.CadetNurseCorps-1942>>.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ “Information Program for the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps,” Bolton MSS.

²⁰⁹ Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 31, 160.

important activities requiring an almost unlimited number of nurses. Not only will the military, naval and veterans hospitals be carrying a heavy load, but the effects of total war will take their toll here and our rehabilitation programs will require highly skilled nurses.”²¹⁰

Some argued that the jobs available to women following the war lacked the challenges that made wartime work satisfying and lacked the economic benefits of wartime employment.²¹¹ Nursing, however, seemed to offer an alternative. The profession was certainly considered a female profession, but had the potential to bring new experiences to women’s lives. Cadet Nurse Corps posters declared “Save his life...and find your own.” Frances Bolton spoke of nursing’s ability to bring fulfillment to women’s lives. She believed nursing could “fulfill your own need for deep experience in the great adventures of living” and nursing’s potential to bring “fullness of living” through a meaningful vocation.²¹² Nursing was not a mundane profession, but required educated women to provide skilled health care to patients on a daily basis.

The biggest change in the wartime workforce took place among women, but more specifically among married women. Married women made up some three million of the new female labor force, and for the first time in America’s history, more married women were at work than single females. One in ten married women entered the workforce during World War II. From 1940 to 1944 the percentage of wives working outside the home grew from 13.9 to 22.5 percent.²¹³ These changes in society, however, could not have occurred without some approval or encouragement from everyone; the necessity of women in the work force during wartime

²¹⁰ Frances Payne Bolton, “Notes to Be Added to Testimony of Stella Goostay,” May 6, 1943, Cont. 111, Folder 1938, Bolton MMS.

²¹¹ Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 31.

²¹² Frances Payne Bolton, “NBC Interview with Representative Frances P. Bolton of Ohio By Mary Mason,” July 3, 1943, Cont. 111, Folder 1938, Bolton MSS>

²¹³ Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 78.

speeded this change.²¹⁴ Only a decade before, more than eighty percent of Americans strongly opposed married women working outside of the home. By 1942 sixty percent believed married women should be employed in war industries, and only thirteen percent opposed wives working in essential war industry. Seventy-one percent believed more married women were needed in the workforce.²¹⁵

Many nursing schools began permitting the marriage of students; hundreds of schools across the country began accepting applicants who were married when they applied.²¹⁶ The marriage rate among nurses was higher than that of teachers or librarians.²¹⁷ Encouraging married women to receive a nursing education and remain in the workforce helped make possible the two-income family. The legislation not only provided funding for married women to enter schools of nursing, but also provided funding for refresher-nursing courses to enable these women to reinstate their nursing licenses and reenter the workforce. The Cadet Nurses Corps promised “insurance against want” because of nursing’s reserve earning power for married women. The Corps also highlighted nursing’s ability to “augment the family income,” on a part-time basis. Though nurses might take “time out” to marry or raise a family, they could then reenter the nursing profession.²¹⁸ By trying to prevent a nursing shortage, the Corps enabled and promoted married women to enter the workforce and contribute to the family income.

Following the war, many women returned to the home, but female employment numbers remained at a higher than prewar figures. Women taking industry jobs often recognized the

²¹⁴ William Chafe, *The American Woman*, 146.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

²¹⁶ United States, *How Advertisers Can Cooperate with the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps*, Government Documents Louisiana State University.

²¹⁷ Fraser Wood, “How Glamorous Is Hospital Nursing,” in *Tomorrow*, September 1943, Cont. 9, Folder 138, Bolton MSS.

²¹⁸ “Information Program for the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps,” Bolton MSS

temporary nature of the work and expected men to regain industry employment once they returned home from war. In 1945 the majority did not want to give up the opportunities for independence and income that came with working, but many were forced to resign.²¹⁹ All women, however, did not return to the home. Before the war, some twelve million women were employed; by November 1946 women made up 16.6 million of America's employed. Some two-thirds of women entering the workforce during the war stayed in the workforce following the war.²²⁰

Women were often excluded from government leadership and advisory positions, but because nursing was a "feminine" profession and therefore women's domain, the Cadet Nurse Corps opened new opportunities for women in government leadership. Nursing provided an excellent opportunity for women to head government programs within a traditional setting. Lucile Petry was a registered nurse and former teacher at the University of Minnesota School of Nursing. She had been appointed to the nurse education staff of the Public Health Service in 1941, and by 1943 had been appointed Dean of the Cornell University New York Hospital School of Nursing. With the creation of the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps in 1943, Petry became the first woman to head a major division of the United States Public Health Service.²²¹ Leading the nursing profession and the Cadet Nurse Corps provided women with an opportunity to prove their efficiency and success at leadership of large governmental programs.

The potential to serve one's country and at the same time receive a free education was also a progressive opportunity for women. In some ways the educational benefits of the Cadet

²¹⁹ Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 31.

²²⁰ Richard Lingeman, *Don't You Know There's a War On?*, 157.

²²¹ United States Federal Security Agency, *United States Cadet Nurse Corps [1943-1948]*, 20; United States Federal Security Agency, "U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps Origin and Plan of Operation," Illinois Digital Archive, <<http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/isl3/id/15931/rec/7>>.

Nurse Corps can also be viewed as a precursor to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the G.I. Bill. The G.I. Bill enabled veterans to receive an education comparable to one's period of service, if one had served more than ninety days on active duty. The bill provided every veteran with at least one year of educational training. Veterans who attended a trade school or institution full time were paid a subsistence allowance. Single veterans were allowed \$50 a month, while those with dependents were allowed \$75 a month.²²²

Nearly eight million veterans went to college or learned a trade under the G. I. Bill. Some 350,000 women had volunteered and served in the military, but only 65,000 took advantage of the veterans' benefits offered by the G.I. Bill for higher education.²²³ The Cadet Nurse Corps provided almost double the number of women with a higher education than did the G.I. Bill. In general, funding for women to receive a higher education during the war marked the beginning of greater democratic access to higher education. While nursing did not challenge society's views of a "traditional" female occupation, the fact that women, regardless of background or financial status, received funding for higher education should not be overlooked.

The Cadet Nurse Corps also helped to professionalize nursing. By requiring schools to meet certain regulations before receiving government funding, the Corps facilitated the standardization of basic nursing education. Schools of nursing were required to be accredited by the state and connected with a hospital approved by the American College of Surgeons or to possess equivalent standards. Registered nurses had only been classified as professionals by the

²²² Charles Hurd and Charles G. Bolte, "How We Planned for The Veterans' Return" in *While You Were Gone*.

²²³ Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph*, 341; Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 47.

U.S. Census Bureau since 1940, and these requirements helped establish professional standards for institutions training nurses.²²⁴

In addition, schools of nursing were also required to provide clinical experience in four basic areas of health care--medicine, surgery, pediatrics, and obstetrics. The regulations for participation in the program further established a professional education curriculum. State boards of nurse examiners also shared responsibility with schools of nursing in guaranteeing that Senior Cadets would be eligible for state board examinations upon graduation. State boards worked with schools of nursing and suggested plans for Senior Cadet nurse training.²²⁵ To ensure that nurses were well-trained, the Surgeon General and Cadet Nurse Corps required participating schools of nursing to prescribe to basic requirements and in doing so, established a standard for the education of nurses.

The Corps also helped improve nursing curriculum, as well as the schools in which nurses were trained. Government funding given to schools of nursing helped them to expand their nursing housing as well as improve their curriculum. By requiring student nurses to complete their education in twenty-four to thirty-six months, nursing schools were required to train student nurses efficiently. Many schools of nursing began offering instruction in science courses taught at nearby junior colleges and universities. During the war, the number of nursing schools using college courses for preclinical training increased by twenty-five percent. Schools of nursing also improved student nurse housing as well as teaching facilities. Nursing schools

²²⁴ Thelma Robinson, *Your Country Needs You*, 29; United States Federal Security Agency, *The United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 23, 46.

²²⁵ United States Federal Security Agency, *The United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 23, 46, 43.

expanded libraries and student health programs, and others revised accounting systems and enrollment records to meet the standards to receive federal funding.²²⁶

The nursing shortage during wartime and the subsequent creation of the Cadet Nurse Corps also elevated the status of nurse within the healthcare profession and helped to show the nation the importance of the nursing profession. By making young women, both student nurses and registered graduate nurses, an essential part of the war effort, the Corps helped elevate the status of the nursing profession.

The image of nurses that the Cadet Nurse Corps projected also helped to provide a more professional image of the nurse and in many ways served as a way of educating the public about the nature of a nursing education. Nurses were seen in the operating room assisting with surgeries, laboratories examining specimens, and patient wards administering shots and other necessary medical treatment. All of these activities required specialized training, and these images strongly opposed the commonly-held opinion that equated nursing duties with those of domestic servants. Frances Bolton believed the Corps also sought “to bring nursing training up out of grubby, apprentice methods into a dignified, intelligent preparation for a professional life.”²²⁷ All of these changes helped contribute to a sense of professionalism and self-worth.

It was hard to be against nurses in time of total war. Millions of dollars more were given to aid healthcare, and during World War II, the overall state of the nation’s health drastically increased. Expenditures on health at federal, state, and local levels had increased from several hundred million in 1939 to more than \$1.1 billion in 1945. With the increase in funding came greater changes in Americans’ health. Between 1932 and 1939, life expectancy barely changed;

²²⁶ United States Federal Security Agency, *The United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 79.

²²⁷ Frances Payne Bolton, “Background of Remarks to Be Made By Congresswoman Frances P. Bolton, at the Cadet Nurse Style Show, Waldorf Astoria Hotel,” August 6, 1943, Cont. 9, Folder 138, Bolton MSS.

from 1939 to 1945, life expectancy overall increased by three years; for African-Americans, life expectancy increased by five years. Also, the death rate for infants under one year decreased by more than one-third.²²⁸

Many historians have written about the paradox of the social experience during World War II. While there was advancement for racial minorities and women that changed both social and economic expectations, conservative attitudes and the traditional consensus was maintained. Women's opportunities expanded, but traditional attitudes concerning women's proper roles largely remained in place.²²⁹ In many ways the Cadet Nurse Corps also embodied the paradox found in the social experience during the war. The Corps eagerly emphasized women's ability to establish a professional career in nursing and gain financial independence, and for married nurses, the Corps provided an education and a way for married women to augment the family income. At the same time, the Corps equated nursing skills with those traditionally given as wifely or motherly functions. They also emphasized the high marriage rate among nurses and nursing education's preparation for both marriage and motherhood. Though the Corps promoted novel changes and anticipated the postwar consensus, they also embodied conservative elements of American society.

Some have seen the changes during wartime that brought about greater equality as fleeting, but the advances that were made were substantial. Wartime changes greatly altered women's perceptions, opportunities, and ambitions a decade or more later.²³⁰ The Cadet Nurse Corps helped foster change during wartime and offered thousands of women and racial minorities an alternative to the traditional consensus. The changes put forth by the Corps

²²⁸ Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph*, 335. The death rate for infants dropped from 48 per 1,000 live births to 31.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 287; William Chafe, *The American Woman*, 188.

²³⁰ Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 214-215.

provided a starting point for change. Within a traditional framework, the nursing profession was able to promote greater equality, and their efforts largely went unchallenged by American wartime society.

When the Japanese surrendered on August 14, 1945, ending the war, recruitment for the Cadet Nurse Corps was terminated immediately. The Bolton Bill had stipulated that the act would cease to be in effect on the date hostilities were terminated or at an earlier date determined by the President.²³¹ Though the war had ended, 116,498 Cadet nurses were still in training and these student nurses supplied nearly eighty percent of the nursing care in almost a thousand civilian hospitals across the country. President Truman extended Corps admission by two months and ordered the Surgeon General to discontinue admitting new Cadet nurses after October 15, 1945.²³² All Cadet nurses admitted on or before this date continued to receive Corps benefits until their nursing education was completed. The official termination of the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps occurred when the remaining Cadet nurses graduated in June 1948.²³³

From the program's beginning in July 1943, until its formal termination in June 1948, the amount of federal funds distributed to schools of nursing for basic nurse training totaled \$149,026,478. The government paid \$1,360, allowing each Cadet nurse to receive a three-year nursing education. Eighty percent of the total expenditure went toward school uniforms, student maintenance, and monthly stipends; tuition and fees only amounted to about eighteen percent of the total funds allotted to schools.²³⁴ The Corps enrolled 169,443 student nurses; of these student nurses, 124,065 successfully completed their training through to graduation. One thousand one hundred twenty-five schools of nursing out of 1,300 across the country participated in educating

²³¹ *United States Statues at Large*, Nurse Training Act of 1943, 155.

²³² United States Federal Security Agency, *The United States Cadet Nurse Corps*, 77.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 78.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

Cadet nurses.²³⁵ During this period, the number of young women admitted to nursing schools totaled 160,583, eighty-three percent of whom were Cadet nurses.²³⁶

Raymond Rubicam considered the Cadet Nurse Corps media recruitment campaign one of the most successful advertising campaigns of the war. Wartime advertisers proved to be an essential component in bringing women and African-Americans into the workforce. The success of war advertising, including the advertising of the Corps, seemed to have initiated the takeoff of the American consumer culture. The most rapid expansion of consumer culture began during the 1950s where advertising increased by 400 percent between the years 1945 and 1960. Perhaps Madison Avenue realized the effectiveness of the strategies of the Office of War Information and the War Advertising Council during World War II as advertisers in the 1950s continued to use wartime advertising tactics by equating consumption with American patriotism and freedom in order to effectively sell products.²³⁷ This is another way in which the Cadet Nurse Corps anticipated aspects of postwar America.

Racial minorities experienced greater equality during the war and witnessed social and economic barriers being broken. The Cadet Nurse Corps helped foster change within the nursing profession and began the fight to eliminate racial barriers in both the nursing profession and in healthcare treatment. African-American nurses were not only funded to receive a free nursing education, but they began training at the same institutions as their white counterparts. African-Americans were also accepted in more professional organizations and worked for their inclusion in the American Nurses Association. Racial barriers in hospitals fell as they began treating

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 78.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 79. The United States Cadet Nurse Corps Equity Act has been introduced in Congress since 1996 and seeks to provide that the service of Cadet nurses constituted active military service.

²³⁷ Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*, 171.

African-Americans along with white patients. For some African-Americans, seeking medical care at an all black hospital was no longer necessary. The fight for social equality was not complete by any means, but the beginnings of change provided hope for the future.

Though the Cadet Nurse Corps never questioned women's roles concerning the type of work appropriate for a woman, it did challenge the traditional consensus of married women remaining in the home. As married women moved into the public sector, the Cadet Nurse Corps provided them with the opportunity to receive a free nursing education by utilizing Corps benefits and to begin a professional career. A career in nursing also allowed them to contribute to the family income, and it seemed some women truly found fulfillment in the nursing profession. The Corps also allowed single women the opportunity to become financially independent, but promised that marriage and motherhood was possible for women with professional careers.

The Cadet Nurse Corps put forth progressive policies and in many ways anticipated the postwar social changes that were to come. Though the Corps promoted greater equality for racial minorities and women, nurses were first able to take on these tasks within a traditionally female profession. Because of the conventional ideas about nursing, the Corps was able to more easily promote challenges to the traditional consensus without causing outrage from conservative thinkers. Either lawmakers were uneasy about criticizing the nursing profession or they truly misjudged the potential that Cadet Nurse Corps legislation had to challenge racial inequalities.

The actions of Congress concerning the OWI domestic budget and the Corps sent contradictory messages. Lawmakers disliked the in-your-face manner in which a "liberal" OWI sought to initiate change. Publishing a pamphlet explaining African-Americans' social contributions , explicitly challenging race relations, was threatening, but providing racially equal

funding for nurses was of no concern. Perhaps lawmakers failed to read the Nurse Training Act of 1943, did not want to condemn the nursing profession, or simply figured that since it was supported by Republican Representative Frances Bolton, its content must have represented mainstream Republican thinking. Southern Democrats perhaps viewed the legislation as a way of ensuring segregation would continue by training African-American nurses to care for the African-American population. No matter the reasoning behind the passage of the bill, it seems that Congress greatly underestimated the ways in which a “conservative” profession could challenge racial equality and segregation. Republican Frances Bolton, wealthy and socially-prominent, proved the danger of putting publicity for social change in the hands of the politically-inept OWI.

The United States Cadet Nurse Corps was a necessary program during wartime, as well as a socially visionary and progressive program that anticipated postwar social changes. For young women across the nation, “a future” with the United States Cadet Nurse Corps meant educational opportunity, a professional career, and financial independence, while at the same time allowing for society’s traditional expectations of marriage and motherhood. The United States Cadet Nurse Corps demonstrates that the “conventional” profession of nursing was anything but traditional.

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APPENDIX: NURSE TRAINING ACT OF 1943

To provide for the training of nurses for the armed forces, governmental and civilian hospitals, health agencies, and war industries, through grants to institutions providing such training, and for other purposes.

June 15, 1943
[H.R. 2664]
[Public Law 74]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That for the purpose of assuring a supply of nurse for the armed forces, governmental and civilian hospitals, health agencies, and war industries, there are hereby authorized to be appropriated sums sufficient to carry out the purposes of this Act: *Provided,* That there shall be no discrimination in the administration of the benefits and appropriations made under the respective provisions of this Act, on account of race, creed, or color. Such sums shall be used for making payments to schools of nursing or other intuitions which have submitted, and had approved by the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service (hereinafter referred to as the Surgeon General), plans for nurses' training, for making payments under section 4, and for all necessary expenses of the Public Health Service in administering the provisions of this Act.

Training of nurses,
Appropriation
authorized.
Post, pp. 505, 616.

No racial
discrimination.

Grants to
institutions.

SEC. 2. A plan for training of nurses may be limited to student-nurse training, or to postgraduate or refresher-nursing courses, or may include both. A plan submitted by any institution may be approved only if it provides--

Training plan.

Conditions for
approval.

(a) That no student or graduate nurse will be included under the plan unless in the judgment of the head of the institution such nurse will be available for military or other Federal governmental or essential civilian services for the duration of the present war, and such nurse so states in her application for inclusion under the plan;

Availability for
war, etc., service.

(b) That nurses under the plan will be provided courses of study and training meeting standards prescribed by the Surgeon General;

Standards of
instruction.

(c) That the institution will furnish student nurses under the plan (without charge for tuition, fees, or other expenses) courses of study and training, uniforms, insignia, and maintenance in accordance with regulations of the Surgeon General;

Furnishing of items
without charge.

(d) That the institution will pay student nurses under the plan a stipend at not less than the following monthly rates: \$15 for the first nine months of study; \$20 for the following fifteen to twenty-one months of combined study and practice, depending upon the curriculum of such institution;

Pay of student
nurses.

(e) That the institution will either afford student nurses under the plan an opportunity to complete their course of training until graduation at such institution and will pay such student nurse a stipend at a monthly rate not less than \$30 for the period following the period of combined study and practice and prior to graduation, or will transfer such student, after completion of the period of combined study and practice and prior to graduation, for training in some other

Completion of
training.

Institution, but only if such training may be credited toward graduation, and the institution to which the nurse is transferred agrees to pay era stipend at a monthly rate of not less than \$30 until graduation; and

(f) That where extramural credit toward graduation can be given under the law of the State in which the institution is located, such institution will make transfers to Federal hospitals, under the conditions specified in subsection (e), in any case where a student nurse desires such transfer and appropriate request for such transfer is made on behalf of such hospital.

Transfers to
Federal hospitals.

SEC. 3. From the sums appropriated therefore the Secretary of the Treasury shall pay each institution, with a plan approved under section 2--

Determination of
grants.

(1) with respect to items furnished student nurses thereunder, amounts determined by the Surgeon General to compensate such institution for --

For items furnished
student nurses.

(A) reasonable tuition and fees for the courses of study and training;

(B) reasonable maintenance provided pursuant to section 2 for the first nine months of their courses study and training, to the extent that such maintenance is not compensated for by the value of their services during such period;

(C) uniforms and insignia, provided in accordance with section 2; and

(D) the minimum rate of stipend specified in section 2 for periods prior to completion of the course of combined study and training referred to in such section; and

(2) with respect to items furnished graduate nurses thereunder, amounts determined by the Surgeon General to compensate such institution for reasonable tuition and fees for postgraduate and refresher course of study, and reasonable maintenance for graduate nurses undertaking postgraduate courses, or such portion of such amounts as may be determined in accordance with regulations of the Surgeon General.

For items furnished
graduate nurses.

SEC. 4. The Surgeon General is authorized, with the approval of the Federal Security Administrator, to enter into agreements with nonprofit organizations for the recruitment of student and graduate nurses for training and courses under plans approved pursuant to this Act, and to compensate such organizations therefore, but in no case shall such compensation exceed the necessary cost, as determined by him, of rendering such service.

Recruitment
agreements.

SEC. 5. Determinations under section 3 or 4 of amounts which any institution or organization shall receive shall be conclusive upon such institution or organization and upon any officer or agency of the Government.

Determination to
be conclusive.

SEC. 6. The method of computing and paying the amounts referred to in sections 3 and 4 shall be as follows:

Computation and payment.

(a) The Surgeon General shall from time to time, on a prepayment or reimbursement basis, estimate or make determination of the amount for each institution or organization, which amount shall be reduced or increased, as the case may be, by any sum by which he finds that unadjusted payments with respect to any prior period were greater or less than the amount which should have been paid to such institution or organization pursuant to section 3 or 4 for such prior period, and shall certify the amount so estimated or determined and so reduced or increased to the Secretary of the Treasury.

(b) The Secretary of the Treasury shall thereupon through the Division of Disbursement of the Treasury Department and prior to audit or settlement by the General Accounting Office pay the institution or organization at the time or times fixed by the Surgeon General the amount so certified.

SEC. 7. In lieu of payment therefor under section 3 the Surgeon General is authorized to procure and provide insignia for student nurses under a plan approved under section 2.

Insignia for student nurses.

SEC. 8. There shall be no discrimination against any institution on account of the size thereof or the number of nurses employed or student nurses training therein.

Size of institution.

SEC. 9. The Surgeon General with the approval of the Federal Security Administrator is hereby authorized to promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act. Such rules and regulations shall be promulgated after conference with an advisory committee of not less than five members consisting of representatives of the nursing profession, hospitals, and accredited nurses training institutions. The members of the committee shall be appointed by the Federal Security Administrator. The members of the committee shall not receive any compensation for their services on the committee, but shall be reimbursed for all necessary travel and subsistence expenses (or receive a per diem in lieu thereof not to exceed \$10 to be fixed by the Federal Security Administrator) while away from their respective places of residence on the business of the committee.

Rules and regulations.

Advisory committee.

SEC. 10. This Act shall cease to be in effect upon the date of the termination of hostilities in the present war as determined by the President or upon such earlier date as the Congress by concurrent resolution or the President may designate, except for purposes of (a) making computations, payments, and adjustments in payments with respect to recruitment, training, and course prior to such date, and (b) making computations, payments, and adjustments in payments so as to permit continuance, after such date, of training, and courses by graduate or student nurses who were receiving training of courses ninety days prior to such

Termination of Act.

date.

Approved June 15, 1943.

Source: United States Statutes at Large. St. 57.153.

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