



**Colonial Hospital early 1920s**

*“At the beginning of our career we must work with only one hour off duty during the day and none off during the night duty...”*  
 – Written in the History of the Class of 1921



**Kahler Hall**

*“Between the time of entering the School of Nursing and capping ceremonies, are months of toil, timidity and trying, but behold the triumph!”*  
 – Myrl Peterson, Kahler School of Nursing graduate (Class of 1937)



**Maxwell Hall**

The Nightingale Pledge was composed by Lystra Gretter, an instructor of nursing at the old Harper Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, and was first used by its graduating class in the spring of 1893. It is an adaptation of the Hippocratic Oath taken by physicians.

*I solemnly pledge myself before God and in the presence of this assembly, to pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully. I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous, and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug. I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession, and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my calling. With loyalty will I endeavor to aid the physician in his work, and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care.*



## **Kahler and Methodist-Kahler School of Nursing 1918-1970**



## **Mayo Clinic Libraries History of Medicine Library Plummer 15-07**

## INTRODUCTION

In 1917 Dr. Melvin S. Henderson, chief of Staff of the Colonial Hospital and physician at Mayo Clinic, and Mary J. Gill, RN, Superintendent of Nurses at the Colonial Hospital recommended the establishment of a 12 month training school for nurses. The Kahler Corporation established the Colonial Hospital Training School for Nurses with admission of the first five students on April 9, 1918.

In 1919 the program was lengthened to 24 months, later being extended to 36 months thereby establishing it as a diploma program in professional nursing. The name of the school was changed to Kahler Hospitals School of Nursing in 1921.

In 1943 the nursing school was approved by the U.S. Public Health Service to offer its students the opportunity to join the Nurse Corps. To be eligible, the student nurse had to promise to remain in essential nursing for the duration of World War II. Four hundred and seven Kahler School of Nursing students participated in this program.

When the Rochester Methodist Hospital was established as a not-for-profit entity on January 1, 1954 under the sponsorship of the National Board of Hospitals and Homes of the Methodist Church, the Kahler School of Nursing was renamed the Methodist-Kahler School of Nursing. In 1970, before the school closed, the 3,827<sup>th</sup> diploma was issued but the school spirit still lives on through its Alumni Association which was organized in 1922 and is still a very active group.

The first library was a nine by twelve foot room located in the freshman dormitory. Sometime during the late 1920s or early 1930s it was equipped with a large table, a few chairs and designated a special study space. Library holdings began with an unabridged *Webster's Dictionary* and a few dozen complimentary copies of nursing textbooks sent to instructors by the publishers. In 1940 a library room large enough to house a wall of book shelves, four tables and twenty-four chairs was created by a partition at the back of the Damon Hotel classroom. Holdings were mainly reference books, periodicals, and magazines of interest to nurses. In 1944 a part-time librarian was hired.

By 1953 the library had a collection of 2,500 catalogued current volumes and a number of professional and popular periodicals. A full-time librarian was hired in 1956 and by 1967 two part-time assistant librarians had been added to the staff. A faculty library committee was active in helping to determine policies and to promote the use of library services. The annual library expenditure for new holdings was \$350. There were 5,201 volumes with 2,947 titles, as well as 42 professional periodicals and a large pamphlet collection as of January 1968. The library grew exponentially until the nursing school closed.

Since 1998 the Alumni Association has given almost \$10,000 in gifts and memorials to the library. The books you see on these shelves comprise the rare books of the Methodist-Kahler School of Nursing library. The entire library numbered over 20,000 volumes most of which are now incorporated into the Mayo Clinic Library and shelved on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of the Plummer Building.

## Sources:

"50 Years Serving Humanity through Education Methodist-Kahler School of Nursing, Rochester, Minnesota 1918-1968." *The Drawsheet, Methodist-Kahler Alumni Association*, Vol. 8, No. 3, February 1988

Nelson, Clark. *Mayo roots: profiling the origins of Mayo Clinic*. Rochester, Minn., Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research: 1990

## PINNING

The tradition of the nursing pin and the ceremonial pinning originated in the 1860's at the Nightingale School of Nursing at St. Thomas Hospital in London. The Kahler pin was designed by Lyla M. Olson and presented with diplomas at graduation. It was composed of a cross, caduceus and Florence Nightingale lamp. The cross was a combination of the Pattee and Maltese crosses. The caduceus, a winged rod around which are entwined two serpents, was born by Aesculapius who was worshiped as the god of medicine by the Greeks. Above the wings of the caduceus is the Nightingale lamp. Prior to 1954 the pin's inscription read "Kahler Hospitals."



**Methodist-Kahler School  
of Nursing Uniform**

*Special thanks to the Methodist-Kahler  
Alumni Association for their generous  
loan of the artifacts in this collection  
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## CAPPING

The nurse's cap was derived from the nun's habit and developed over time into two types – a long cap, that covers much of the nurse's hair and a short cap that sits atop the nurse's hair. Three months after entry into the Kahler and Methodist-Kahler Nursing program students receive their caps during the capping ceremony. This traditionally marked the beginning of clinical work and the wearing of the nursing uniform. Lyla M. Olson, a graduate of the Anchor Hospital School of Nursing, designed the Kahler cap.



**Nurse Capping Ceremony  
Plummer Hall**

## CANDLELIGHTING SERVICE

This tradition is symbolic of Florence Nightingale, affectionately known by the British soldiers in the Crimean War (1853-1856) as the "lady with the lamp" because of the late hours she worked tending to the sick and wounded.

Each nursing student is given her own ceramic lamp, a replica of the one Miss Nightingale would have used, holding a single candle. Each candle is then lit from the lamp of another student, dressed in the traditional nurses uniform of the Nightingale era, thus passing on light from one to another in the spirit of nursing. The class then recites the Nightingale Pledge that serves as a professional mission statement reflecting the deep-seated vision and values of nursing.

