

EDITH HENDERSON
1888 - 1917

MAUD MILLER
1879 - 1930

ELIZABETH SCHNEIDER
1883 - 1983



Section G, Block 24, Lot 15

At the turn of the century women's occupations were fairly limited. Rosie the Riveter had yet to be introduced, so the three most common jobs women aspired to were nursing, teaching, and getting married. Of the three, the most respected "profession" was that of housewife/mother, followed by teaching. While nursing was quickly gaining respect, thanks in a great part to the work of Florence Nightingale and Clara Barton, as the 1800s drew to a close it was still largely regarded as an occupation that required little education or intelligence to pursue. Early nurses worked just as hard—if not harder—than those of today, but without the respect that they deserved. Each one of these pioneer medical aides helped clear the way for those currently in the nursing profession.



Like many women of their time, (Lydia) Maud Miller, her sister Edith (Miller) Henderson, and their cousin Elizabeth Schneider looked for an occupation that would give them some semblance of independence. Having grown up on the family farm in Petoskey, perhaps the Miller sisters wanted something

that allowed them to leave the family homestead and see what the world had to offer. Nursing offered them that opportunity, and over the years their job led them from the East Coast to the West. Their cousin Elizabeth had become a caregiver at an early age, taking care of her seven siblings after her mother died. For her, nursing was perhaps just a natural extension of what she had been doing since age 16.

The Miller family moved to Petoskey in 1881 from Ontario, Canada in 1881 in search of good farmland. Henry scouted the area first, debating between Charlevoix County and Emmet County. He finally decided on 80 acres in Resort Township before he returned to Canada for his wife Catherine, children John Herbert (5) and Lydia Maud (3), and mother-in-law Katherine Schneider. The entire family traveled by boat to Petoskey, arriving in spring of 1882. One source says that they had everything they owned, including farm equipment, cows, and tulip bulbs. While nothing more is said about the cows or farm equipment, the history states that one of the first things the family did when settled was to plant the tulip bulbs, perhaps as a reminder of the home they left behind. In 1885 the family transplanted the bulbs again as they moved into a new home; the descendants of these bulbs were still blooming as late as 1968.

Between the Miller arrival in 1882 and 1893 five more children were born into the family: Arthur (1883); Maysie (1885); Edith (1888); Harry (1891); and Edna (1893). Heartbreak came when Arthur died in 1884; it was said that Catherine never sang again after his death.

The Miller family quickly settled into Petoskey. Education and reading were extremely important and all the children attended the newly started Petoskey Public Schools. Maud taught at Maplewood School from 1905-1906 and had two siblings, Edna and Harry, in her classroom, while her father Henry served as director of the school board.



Maud and Edith took separate paths into nursing. Maud left Petoskey to attend nursing school in Ann Arbor. There she would have lived with several other women doing menial labor, spending hours in the classroom, and working long shifts in the hospital. However, she would also be free from restrictions at home, spending her few open hours having fun with the other female students and male doctors. Edith stayed closer to home, graduating from the Petoskey Hospital Training School for Nurses in 1912. Her instructors included Drs. George and John Reycraft and Dr. Nihart. While Edith put in long hours, she most likely still lived at home and did not experience some of the freedoms her sister did.

According to the article “Nursing 1910 Style” by Diane Sussman, nursing schools required students to have at least two years of high school education and have “careful home training.” Before they learned actual medical skills, students spent months learning (and practicing) the correct way to scrub floors, make meals, empty bedpans, clean, and make a bed. Only after they showed proficiency in those matters did they begin their medical classwork and the 12-hour nursing shifts that went with them. Illness was a very real risk, and many of the nurses, already weakened by exhaustion, succumbed to the same sicknesses they treated.

While nursing schools required dedication and hard work, they also offered some excitement. Many of the women were independent for the first time in their lives, interacting with other young women and doctors during their off-time and experiencing freedoms they never could



back home. While many parents may have frowned on the frivolity, it was necessary to balance the sadness, sickness, and labor these nurses faced on an almost daily basis.

Upon graduation, nurses had the option to work in hospitals or become private duty nurses. Maud spent some time after graduation



Edith Miller Henderson

Edith served in Washington, D.C. during World War I. Her responsibilities likely included cleaning infected wounds as soldiers returned home, feeding and bathing those too weak to care for themselves, and constant cleaning. During the flu epidemic of 1918 her already 12-hour long shifts would lengthen, often reaching 20 hours or more as other doctors and nurses became sick. After the war Edith took a job as a private nurse for an elderly couple and moved to California. She died in a boating accident in Chicago in 1930.

Edith, like a majority of nursing graduates began her medical career as a private nurse. Private nursing could be a lonely and demanding job. Not only were nurses exposed to whatever illness their patients suffered from, but they were expected to be at the patients' beck and call constantly. An undated letter from Edith to her sister Maysie states that she [Edith] had to turn down an opportunity to have fun because "one cannot get two miles away from her [the patient]." Another line says, "It is now after eleven and I intended writing something during the day, but every spare minute we have to play dominos."

On the other hand, private nursing allowed women to travel and experience things far different from their homes. That same letter from Edith is written on stationery from the Waldorf Astoria of New York and says, "We went thro' Wanamakers store, and I saw so many pretty things I wanted. It is the largest store in New York. This afternoon we took the subway to Brooklyn and return quite an experience for me." A postcard dated May 20, 1913 from Atlantic City,

New Jersey talks about her “beautiful resort” complete with “saltwater tap.” These experiences were a far cry from Petoskey.

Soon after that postcard, Edith returned home and began to work in the office of Dr. John Reycraft. While she still put in long hours—usually 12-hour shifts—it must have seemed like a vacation after being available 24 hours a day as a private nurse. Her responsibilities included treating minor medical conditions, feeding and attending to weak patients, giving early forms of physical therapy for recovering patients, caring for new babies and mothers, and, of course, cleaning. On Dec. 1, 1915 Edith married Robert C. Henderson. Unfortunately she died February 5, 1917 of a tubular pregnancy.



Lydia Maud Miller

While the rest of the world still held uncertain feelings for professional nurses, Dr. John Reycraft, who had known and worked with Edith for seven years, felt no such constraints. Upon Edith's death he wrote a letter to the grieving family, giving an inside look at how much doctors depended on a good nurse.

She came to us and I saw from the beginning that we had one who was willing bodily and able mentally to do for the sick. It made no difference to her ever what the disability to her own comfort might be because she seemed ever ready to serve us and our patients whether late at night or in the small hours of the morning, or when she must have been tired beyond endurance she went at her work with a vim which showed that her high sense of duty placed her beyond her individual comfort. Her capabilities were of the best and when I had a patient that was distressingly ill and the life was spared of by myself and friends and I had her placed under the care of the deceased I could always go and seek my rest knowing that I had reposed obligations in

one who was able and willing to care for them, in that way I learned to regard her extraordinarily.

Elizabeth Schneider's nursing career took a much different path than her cousins. Born on May 28, 1883 to Christian and Hendreika Schneider, Elizabeth moved with her family from Grey County, Ontario in the late 1870s and settled in Horton Bay. At age 16 Elizabeth had to give up any frivolities a young lady looked forward to in order to care for her brothers and sisters after the early death of her mother. Heartbreak struck the family again a year later when her father, a well-known thresher in the Charlevoix County area, drowned in Little Traverse Bay. At least two of the now orphaned children were under the age of 10, and Elizabeth had to put any of her dreams on hold to keep the family together.

Elizabeth was a hard worker, a trait that would serve her well when she became a nurse. She kept a clean house and made clothing for the entire family. One favorite family story related how she walked from Horton Bay to Petoskey and back again, simply to buy lemons to make a lemon pie for the family.

Once the younger children were out of the nest Elizabeth attended the Petoskey School of Nursing, graduating with four others in 1913. In 1918 she enlisted as an army nurse; like so many others, she was stricken by the flu epidemic of 1918. Prior to her own illness she



Elizabeth Schneider

had been a primary caregiver to many individuals beset with the influenza virus. Like Elizabeth, many nurses put their life on the line to care for those suffering, exposing themselves to the worst of the illness. Her case was extremely severe; by the time she recovered her strength the war had ended.

Elizabeth served as the Petoskey Hospital head nurse for many years, working for Drs. George and John Reycraft. Among other responsibilities, Elizabeth trained several nursing students each year as the director of the Petoskey School of Nursing. She

retired in 1955 after 42 years of nursing, and began rooming with her good friend and former coworker Jessie Fairfield.

Like Jessie, Elizabeth had been very active in the Petoskey community. She was instrumental in the formation of many women's groups, including the current Petoskey Garden Club. She organized the Petoskey District Nurses Association in 1920 and was a member of both the American Nurses Association and the American League of Nursing Education, as well as the Red Cross. Elizabeth also led the way for many other women as a charter member of the Petoskey Business and Professional Women's Club.

In 1962 Elizabeth moved to Grand Haven to live with her younger brother Fred. While there she remained active, joining the Tri Cities Garden Club and the Rebekah Lodge, and faithfully attending the Methodist Church of the Dunes. She died March 13, 1983, two months short of her 100th birthday. Like her pioneer nursing cousins Maud and Edith, Elizabeth had broken ground for the nurses of today. They took a little-respected job and, through dedication, devotion, and intelligence, showed everyone that nursing was a valuable and necessary profession. Eventually the rest of the world would feel the same as Dr. Reycraft, learning to respect these women who put their heart and souls into caring for others.

The Nurse's Salary

To the Editor of The New York Times:

Apropos of the letter by "New York Physician" in to-day's TIMES. I would like to state that I have been a graduate nurse for the last ten years and have been employed both as private nurse and hospital supervisor, but in that time have known of no graduate nurse of good standing who gave her services as private nurse at \$21 per week, \$25 for ordinary cases and \$30 for contagious cases being the rule, and no "trust formation" is needed to raise prices to these amounts.

Ten years is reckoned as the average time that a nurse may work, as usually after that she is incapacitated by illness, death, or marriage, seldom retiring to live on the amount saved from her exorbitant salary.

A NURSE WHO KNOWS.

The New York Times

March 2, 1912.

There were obviously some tensions between doctors and nurses regarding the sacrifices nurses made financially as well as in lifestyle.



Schneider Lot, Block 144, Lot 5



Nurses (left to right) Maude Miller, Jessie Fairfield, Elizabeth Schneider, Teen-aged Dean Burns, Edith Henderson, (Student Nurse), (Student Nurse)
Portrayed by: Mary Kathryn Valentine, Kathy Hart, Jean Beckley, Megan Anderson, Carrie Bell, Gabriela Hickman, Amy Bell

JOHN J. REYCRAFT
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON
PETOSKEY, MICHIGAN

Feb 8th, 1917

To Mr. Henry Miller & those Nearly Concerned.

Dear Friends:-

I cannot let this troublesome occasion pass without sending you a message concerning Miss Edith Miller Henderson whom I have known so intimately, socially and professionally for the past seven years. I regret her demise next to her most intimate relatives and am so sorry that she is gone from among us. Her~~X~~ in the great agrabreac equasion has not been satisfactorily determined in my mind. Socially no body can have any word^{but}/of the best and professionally I wish to speak as one having knowledge from an inside source. She came to us and I saw from the beginning that we had one who was willing bodily and able mentally to do for the sick. It made no difference to her ever what the disability to her own comfort might be because she seemed ever ready to serve us and our patients whether late at night or in the small hours of the morning, or when she must have been tired beyond indurance she went at her work with a vim which showed that her high sence of duty placed her beyond her individual comfort. Her capabilities were of the best and when I had a patient that was distressingly ill and the life was spared of by my elf and ~~so~~ friends and I had her ~~placed~~ under the care of the deceased I could always go and seek my rest knowing that ~~I~~ had reposed obligations in one who was able and willing to care for them, in that way I learned to regard her extraordinarily . One of the saddest things I have now to contemplate is her passing from this stage of activity and to be cognicent of the fact that she who could have done most good comes to an untimely end.

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JOHN J. REYCRAFT
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON
PETOSKEY, MICHIGAN

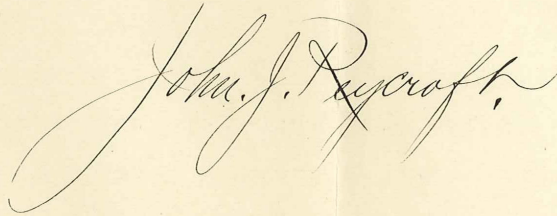
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I do not send you this missive to cause you more heart aches and regrets but am hoping that these words of regards and commendation from me may help to fortify you in your berievments Millions would not be too much as a ransom for her return to earth because her goodness was desireable at any cost, but now that things of earth avail nothing I hope you will not ^{be} agrieved at me for saying what I have, anyhow as it relieves my mind of a great deal of the burden that I have spoken to you personally. That her husband has missed the companionship of the nobelest of women and that her immediate family has had removed from their midst a shining light I see most plainly.

Very egrretfully, I am making this comment on the life which fate seemed to have in store ^{for} what darkened eyes cannot rightfully comprehend.

Sincerely,

JJR/B

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John J. Reycraft". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Sincerely,".

**MRS. HENDERSON
DIED MONDAY**

HAD RECENTLY HAD AN OPERATION

Was Wife of Robert Henderson, of
Resort, and Daughter of Mr. and
Mrs. Henry Miller.

Mrs. Robert Henderson, of Resort, and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Miller, died Monday morning at Petoskey hospital. She had undergone an operation there Saturday.

None but the immediate family knew of her illness so that her death was a severe shock to all her friends.

Edith Miller as most knew her, was one of the most popular and lovable persons of all the young people in this vicinity. She was a graduate nurse from the Petoskey hospital and her kindly ministrations had relieved many an aching heart and softened the pain when the death angel was hovering near.

She was born at the family home on Walloon Lake July 28, 1888, and was married to Robert Henderson Dec. 1, 1916.

All who knew them felt that their union was a happy event as they were so mutually adapted to each other.

She leaves besides her husband, her father and mother, two brothers, Herbert and Harry, and three sisters, Maud, who is in California, Mazie at home, and Mrs. Edna Risk, of Detroit, and many other relatives and friends to mourn her untimely death.

Miss Maud cannot come because of the distance and Joseph Henderson who is Florida is not expected. Mrs. Hattie Schaaf and Mrs. Risk may come from Detroit, and Prof. Will Henderson, from Ann Arbor, for the funeral, which will be held from the home on Charlevoix road, very likely Wednesday at 10 a.m. The exact time cannot be given as distant relatives may decide to come. Definite announcement will be given tomorrow.

Mrs. Henderson was a member of the Presbyterian church, the Fortnightly club and the Rebekah lodge.

Rev. P.B. Ferris will have charge of the service. Burial in Greenwood.

Petoskey Evening News
February 5, 1917

**PETOSKEY WOMAN
DIES AT CHICAGO**

**MISS MAUDE MILLER VICTIM
OF BOAT ACCIDENT. BODY
BROUGHT HERE TODAY.**

Daughter of Mrs. and Mrs. Henry
Miller of Resort. Funeral
At Stone's Tomorrow.

The body of Miss Maude Miller, who was drowned in Lake Michigan at Chicago, Tuesday night, was brought to Petoskey today and the funeral will be held from the Stone Funeral Home tomorrow forenoon at 10, with Rev. G.A. Weaver in charge. Miss Miller, a nurse, died when a boat in which she was riding, upset. Ronald Fisk, a brother-in-law, went to Chicago and identified the body.

Miss Miller was born in Ontario and came to Petoskey with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Miller of Resort. She took her nurse's training at Ann Arbor and followed her profession in Washington D.C., Los Angeles and for three years had been in Chicago.

Surviving besides the parents are two brothers, Herbert and Harry Miller of Petoskey; and two sisters, Edna and Maysie, of Resort township.

The Petoskey Evening News
Friday, July 11, 1930

ELIZABETH SCHNEIDER, 99

Elizabeth Schneider, 99, of 1421 Washington St., Grand Haven, died March 13 at Shore Haven Nursing Home in Grand Haven.

Services will be Wednesday at 2 p.m. at the United Methodist Church of the Dunes in Grand Haven. Burial will be 1 p.m. Friday at Greenwood Cemetery in Petoskey.

Miss Schneider was born in Horton Bay on May 28, 1883 and was a registered nurse, graduating from the Petoskey Hospital School of Nursing. She was a superintendent of Petoskey Hospital, a forerunner of Little Traverse Hospital. Miss Schneider was also the director of the school of nursing at the Petoskey Hospital prior to her retirement.

She was a life member of the Petoskey District Nurses Association which she organized in 1920; a member of the American Nurses Association; a member of the American National League of Nursing Education; the American Red Cross; a charter member of Petoskey Business and Professional Womens Club; a charter member of the Petoskey Garden Club and a member of the Tri Cities Garden Club in Grand Haven; a member of the Rebekah Lodge 104 and Rebekah Lodge 10 in Grand Haven; a member of the United Methodist Church of the Dunes.

Survivors include one brother, Fred Schneider of Grand Haven.

The body is at the VanZantwick, Bartels and Kammeraad Funeral Home in Grand Haven where friends may call Tuesday from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m.

The family suggests memorials to the United Methodist Church of the Dunes, 717 Sheldon Rd., Grand Haven 49417.

Petoskey News Review
March 14, 1983

CLASS WORK FOR NURSES OF LOCKWOOD HOSPITAL

At the last meeting of the board of trustees of Lockwood Hospital the following course of instruction for the hospital nurses was adopted. The course covers a period of two years:

CLASS WORK.

First year – Ethics of nursing, technical terms, beds and bed making, enemas, suppositories and douches, baths and catheterization, poultices, counter irritants, symptomatology, pulse, temperature, respiration, surgical nursing, emergencies, slight ailments, bandaging, hemorrhages.

Second year – Anatomy, physiology, obstetrics, diseases of children, materia medica, toxicology, fractures and splints, fevers, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles, small pox, insane sick, autopsies and signs of death.

The following physicians have been secured for the series of lectures embraced in the first year's work:

Dr. John Reycraft – Anatomy and Physiology.

Dr. Kellogg – Obstetrics and Infant Diet.

Dr. Owen – Surgery.

Dr. Pedden – Materia Medica.

Dr. Ramsdell – Fevers.

Dr. Nihart – Symptomatology.

Dr. Geo. Reycraft – Eye, Ear and Throat.

Dr. Montique – Toxicology.

Dr. John Reycraft – Gynecological Surgery.

Dr. McLennan – Asepsis and Antiseptis.

Petoskey Record (Excerpt from article)

December 14, 1904

83 GRADUATE FROM PETOSKEY'S SCHOOL OF NURSING

The first school of nursing in Petoskey was incorporated in 1908 in connection with the former Petoskey Hospital on Lake -st.

Six students made up the first graduating class, taught by the superintendent and staff doctors. All classes conducted by doctors were held in the evening. A nurse teacher was later employed, according to Elizabeth Schneider, RN, who provided the names and information for nurses week.

A total of 83 diplomas were granted to the school of nursing, and seven graduates became superintendents of nursing in other hospitals. Mamie Moorhouse became a superintendent in a Kansas hospital, Gracia Hickley and Estella Anesser were superintendents in California, Elizabeth Schneider and Anna March were stationed at Petoskey Hospital and Edith Readinoud went to Cheboygan Hospital.

Graduates of the school who served in the Army during World War I included the Misses Bosma, Johnson, Helzel, LeCroix, and Luderman.

Other graduates of the nursing school in Petoskey served all over the country and overseas:

-Anastasia Linehan served in World War II with the "American Fund for the French Wounded" remaining there two years after the war ended to do French refugee work.

-Helen Boss and Mae Gallagher spent six months at Fort Riley, Kansas, before the war ended.

-Clara Giles, Ruth Schmalzried, Mary Hall, Della Degrool, May Gallagher, Wilma Annesser, Pearl Gill, Clara Noll, Eva Burdick, and Ruth Reberg have all been supervisors in Petoskey.

-Estella Annesser organized and served as nursing superintendent of three California Hospitals. She also served in Japan and Honolulu during Pearl Harbor. Currently living in Florida, she gives her services at the Public Health Department and also at the local blood bank.

-Wilma Annesser specialized in the care of patients undergoing heart and brain surgery in Ann Arbor and served there until retiring.

-Harriet Samoleska did public work in Chicago until retiring. Myrtle Harmon was night superintendent at Petoskey Hospital for 27 years. Marian Burns retired from the army as a major.

-Alma McMaster did Public Health work east of Petoskey.

Continued

-Estella Rodgers organized nursing at Burns Clinic and was head nurse there for many years.

-Fay Otto became a nurse teacher.

-Ruth Schmalzried (Pfeiffle) retired as assistant director of nurses at Little Traverse Hospital.

-Era Burdick retired as supervisor at Little Traverse Hospital.

-Lucille Johnson Dunne retired as school nurse and public health nurse in the Petoskey area.

-Bettie Lovelace served as school nurse in Petoskey.

-Mildred Davis retired as supervisor at New Grace Hospital in Detroit.

-Valerie Ripley took up anesthesiology.

-Doris Reid who finished her education at Traverse City did Public Health work in Hyden, Kentucky for several years and recently retired from Public Health work in the Burt Lake area.

Petoskey News Review

March 28, 1974

PROCLAMATION

TO THE NURSES OF PETOSKEY AND EMMET COUNTY;

IN THE ABSENCE OF MAYOR A.B. KLISE, I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO CALL YOUR SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE ENROLLMENT OF NURSES FOR RED CROSS SERVICE ASKED FOR BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND NURSES ARE NEEDED FOR WAR SERVICE AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT NURSES OF PETOSKEY AND EMMET COUNTY WILL DO THEIR BIT. ENROLLMENT SHOULD BE MADE AT ONCE. FURTHER INFORMATION MAY BE HAD AT THE HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE EMMET COUNTY RED CROSS IN PETOSKEY.

JOHN L.A. GALSTER,

MAYOR PRO TEM.

Petoskey News Review

June 4, 1918



Petoskey's first baby parade, 1891

