

The Duke University Medical Center Archives and Memorabilia Department

DUMC 3702

Durham, North Carolina

27710 USA

Phone: (919) 383-2653

Fax: (919) 383-1649

Email: dumc.archives@mc.duke.edu

URL: <http://dumc.archives.duke.edu/>

Guide to the Bessie B. Baker papers, 1930-1941

Contains the professional papers of Bessie Baker, first dean of the Duke University School of Nursing. Types of materials include correspondence, writings, and course materials. Major subjects include Duke Hospital, Duke University School of Nursing, nursing education, and nursing students. Materials range in date from 1930 to 1941.

2004

Descriptive Summary

Collection Title: Bessie B. Baker Papers, 1930-1941

Creator: Baker, Bessie

Extent: 1 record storage box, 800 items, .5 linear feet

Processed By: Archives staff

Date Completed: December 2003

Encoded By: Emily Glenn

Biographical Note

Bessie Baker was born in Maryland in 1874. She graduated from the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, where she served for several years as assistant director of nursing. Her next appointment was as assistant superintendent of nurses at the Women's Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. During World War I, Baker was chief base nurse at Base Hospital No. 18, a Johns Hopkins Hospital unit. Following the war, Baker returned to school to continue her nursing studies. Upon completion of her work at Teachers College of Columbia University in 1922, she became the director of the Charles T. Miller Hospital in St. Paul, Minnesota and assistant professor of nursing at the University of Minnesota.

In 1929, Baker was recruited by Wilburt Cornell Davison (first dean of the Duke University School of Medicine) to become the first dean of the Duke University School of Nursing. Baker officially joined Duke University in 1930; the School of Nursing opened under her guidance in 1931. Baker was especially valued by Davison for her input into planning for the areas of nursing staff, operating room, equipment and materials logistics. She convinced Davison to charge tuition and award diplomas, rather than certificates, to School of Nursing graduates.

Bessie Baker retired in 1938 after forming a solid foundation for the Duke University School of Nursing. A portrait of Baker was presented to Duke University by the School of Nursing Alumni on June 4, 1939. Baker died in 1942, and on September 29, 1943, nurses and physicians voted to change the name of the Nurses' Home to Baker House in her honor.

Collection Overview

Contains correspondence, writings, and teaching materials of Bessie Baker, faculty member and dean (1930-1938), of the Duke University School of Nursing. Forms part of the Duke University School of Nursing records. Materials range in date from 1930 to 1941.

Online Catalog Headings

Baker, Bessie B.

Duke University. School of Nursing.

Duke University -- Faculty.

Education, Nursing.

Guide to the Bessie B. Baker papers, 1930-1941

[Related Material](#)

School of Nursing Records.
Duke University Medical Center Archives.

Ann Jacobansky Papers.
Duke University Medical Center Archives.

Myrtle Irene Brown Papers.
Duke University Medical Center Archives.

Ruby Wilson Papers.
Duke University Medical Center Archives.

Thelma Ingles Papers.
Duke University Medical Center Archives.

Guide to the Bessie B. Baker papers, 1930-1941

Detailed Description of the Collection

Papers, 1930-1941

Correspondence, letters of recruitment and appointment, 1930-1938

Correspondence, letters to new students, 1931-1932

Lecture notes, orthopedics for nurses, ca. 1932-1934

Lecture notes, surgery and practical nursing, ca. 1932-1938

Student Government Association of Duke School of Nursing, official report, 1939-1940

Student Government Association of Duke School of Nursing, correspondence regarding student conduct, 1941

Memoranda to student council from School of Nursing Committee, 1938

Nominations for student government officers, 1940-1941, 1940

Student government test on handbook, n.d.

Procedure Revision Committee, n.d.

Honor code and honor system, ca. 1938

Naming of Duke Hospital wards, n.d.