

Mary breckinridge



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Jennifer St. Pierre 7/10/2012 Mary Breckenridge NU 120 Michelle R. Edwards MSN, RN Breckenridge School of Nursing Mary Breckenridge was born in 1881 in Kentucky. She was born into an influential family, and for that she enjoyed a privileged childhood as well as getting an education in the U. S and Europe. Mary Breckenridge's father was the U. S ambassador to Czar Nicholas II of Russia. By the time Mary Breckenridge was 26 years old she had become widowed, as well as losing both of her children at an early age. At this time Mary Breckenridge has decided to dedicate her life in improving the health of women and children. Gina Castlenovo, November 2003. ) Mary Breckinridge became a registered nurse in 1910 and worked at St. Luke's Hospital in New York. During this time she was as well working in France during World War I, this is where Mary Breckinridge became exposed to new healthcare ideas. Mary Breckenridge stated " After I had met British nurse-midwives, first in France and then on my visits to London, it grew upon me that nurse-midwifery was the logical response to the needs of the young child in rural America... My work would be for them". Gina Castlenovo, November 2003. ) Proceeding after World War I Mary Breckenridge went to Columbia University and studied public health. She wanted to conquer the health issues in eastern Kentucky; this area had few roads and absolutely no physicians. Her theory was if she could be successful in such a run down, poor area she could be successful anywhere. Mary Breckenridge got around by traveling horseback and teaching families about their health as well as local lay midwives about birth practices.

By doing this she had learned that women lacked prenatal care and gave birth to an average of nine children, this was done by mostly self taught

midwives, and farmer's wives. They relied on traditional beliefs and invasive procedures. (Gina Castlenovo, November 2003. ) Mary Breckinridge believed children's healthcare should start in the prenatal period (birth-child's first years) due to a high maternal mortality. When returning to London she became a certified nurse-midwife. She then went to Scotland to observe the work of a community midwifery system.

This system served poor and rural areas. The structure was decentralized and was used as a model for the Frontier Nursing Services. Once arriving back in Kentucky in 1925, Mary Breckinridge began the work that would introduce a new type of rural health care in the United States. (Gina Castlenovo, November 2003. ) In 1925 The Frontier Nursing Service (FNS) was established, this was a private charitable organization. The entire serving area was about seven hundred square miles in southeastern Kentucky. Mary Breckinridge raised over six million dollars to support this organization.

Many people believed this was due to her influential connection and speaking engagements. The staff was made up of nurse-midwives that were trained in England. The staff traveled by horseback and or by foot so that they could provide quality prenatal and childbirth care in the clients' own home, they functioned as both midwives and family nurses. Clients were able to pay low fees in money and or goods. No one was turned away, and in doing so both maternal and infant mortality rates decreased significantly. (Gina Castlenovo, November 2003. )

The Frontier Nursing Service (FNS) registered over sixty four thousand patients since 1925. The FNS as well delivered over seventeen thousand

babies with only eleven deaths. One of the nurse-midwife began the first American school of midwifery in New York in 1932. The FNS founded its own school in Hyden Kentucky in 1939. Mary Breckinridge ran the Frontier Nursing Service until she passed away in 1965. (Gina Castlenovo, November 2003. ) The FNS still serves southeastern Kentucky, now with a hospital in Hyden, four rural health clinics, a home health agency, and the FNS School of Midwifery and family Nursing.

Many people from all around the world come to study this particular model of rural and social service delivery. (Gina Castlenovo, November 2003. ) The American College of Nurse Midwives recognizes Breckinridge as “ the first to bring nurse-midwifery to the Untied States” and the Frontier School of Nursing as “ a leader in nurse-midwifery in the Untied States. In 1982 Mary Breckinridge was inducted into the American Nurses Association’s Hall as a tribute for her contributions to the nursing profession in women’s health, community and family nursing, as well as the rural health care delivery. Gina Castlenovo, November 2003. ) Mary Breckinridge had the right Idea about wanting to help the less fortune. In today’s society we have Medicaid. The Medicaid program was designed to provide health coverage for lower-income people, families, pregnant women, children, elderly and people with disabilities. (Medicaid) References Gina Castlenovo, M. M. (November 2003. ). Mary Breckinridge <http://www.truthaboutnursing.org/press/pioneers/breckinridge.html>. Medicaid. (n. d. ). Medicaid<http://www.healthcare.gov/using-insurance/low-cost-care/medicaid/>. Washington, D. C. 20201.