

SENTIMENTAL WOMEN NEED NOT APPLY A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN NURSE

AMERICA'S BLACK NURSES' CONTRIBUTIONS AND STRUGGLES EXPLORED IN SENTIMENTAL WOMEN NEED NOT APPLY. Wry and Moving Chronicle of Evolving Role of America's Caregivers to Premiere Monday, November 5 on PBS.

SENTIMENTAL WOMEN NEED NOT APPLY: A history of the American Nurse, premiering Monday, November 5 at 10 p.m. (ET; check local listings) on PBS, profiles the history of professional caregivers in the United States—the American nurses who battled disease, discrimination, and ignorance to shape modern medicine and health care practices. It also portrays the remarkable courage and efforts of black women who triumphed in their fight to join the profession.

Presented on PBS by WGBY-TV/Springfield, Massachusetts, **SENTIMENTAL WOMEN NEED NOT APPLY** is produced by award-winning filmmakers Diane Garey—herself a registered nurse—and

Lawrence R. Hott. After being a nurse for 10 years, Ms. Garey says, "I could not walk away from that experience without being profoundly touched by it, or wondering how nursing was humanly possible. Nurses come into a hospital or a home to deal with another person's suffering, and they succeed at it. I made this film to understand and explore that issue—what it means, and has meant, to be a nurse."

Black women who wanted to be nurses faced formidable hurdles—their gender and their race. The film chronicles their evolution from victims of discrimination to successful professionals and pathfinders in compelling interviews and archival film footage. "The black nurse became a model. The highest achievement of black womanhood was represented in this nurse with her satchel. She was looked on with pride," says Michigan State University historian Darlene Clark Hine in the film.

SENTIMENTAL WOMEN NEED NOT APPLY begins with the Civil War, and ends with the 1990's, telling the story of nurses

and their profession as it changed, and was changed by, American crises and societal expectations. In 1861, the appalling death rate in war camp hospitals drove Simon Cameron, the Union Secretary of War, to appoint Dorothea Dix to plan new barracks hospitals and recruit this country's first trained nurses, using Florence Nightingale's new principles of nursing.

Dix recruited her nurses carefully—accepting only women over 30, and insisting on modesty and plain looks. In the film, Susan Reverby, a historian and director of Women's Studies at Wellesley College, describes these candidates. "Florence Nightingale talks about not wanting nurses to be sentimental women. They didn't want women who were coming because some man had abandoned them, or a marriage proposal had failed—they didn't want a woman who had 'sexual' interests."

What was said of "sentimental" women held true for black women as well—they need not apply. Racial discrimination was a consistent problem. Hospitals were often segregated, and the armed forces, a major nursing employer, would not accept black

nurses into the ranks. At the close of World War I, when a dreadful flu epidemic swept the country, the Army Nurse Corps only briefly accepted black nurses who offered their services.

But this was not the end of their battle to join the ranks of professional nurses in mainstream America. Black nurses worked in the public health movement, often providing the only health care available in urban and rural communities.

Again during World War II, the country faced a nursing shortage, and President Roosevelt called for an emergency "draft of nurses." Black nurses who applied were spurned. The Navy refused to employ black women and the Army had only a small quota for its segregated hospitals. In the film, M. Elizabeth Carnegie, a registered nurse and the author of a history of black women in nursing, recalls her efforts to enlist them: "I applied to the Navy, and I just got a letter, 'We are not taking colored nurses.' Period—no other explanation that that."

The film movingly recalls the avalanche of protests organized by black nurses that caused the Army and Navy to end their official discrimination in January of



1945, and to induct black nurses into the armed forces three weeks later. Eighty years after the Civil War, black women finally won recognition as professional caregivers, free and able to serve their country.

At the close of the film, nurses discuss the issues of today—what nursing can and should mean in the face of demands posed by sophisticated technol-

ogy. "You go into a room and you read the telemetry, you read the patient's heartbeat, you read the I.V. monitor before you even look at a patient's face—because that's where medical orders are oriented," says registered nurse Sally Tisdale in the film. "The challenge for nurses is to have that intimate moment of compassion with a person in spite of everything that surrounds them."

AARP CHAPTER NEWS

The American Association of Retired Persons membership Chapter #4395 have selected the participants of the Las Vegas Blind Center, 1001 Bruce, as recipients of Thanksgiving cheer baskets.

The AARP volunteers are planning to spend an afternoon of good fun (singing, games and food) with the group.

Each blind participant will take home with them a fruit basket to share with their families and friends.

The chapter meets each 3rd Thursday of the month, West Las Vegas Library, 951 W. Lake Mead, Las Vegas Nv. 89106. All are welcomed.

VFW POST 10057, AL POST # 10 AND THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR - KEEP HOPE ALIVE TO HOST SENIOR CITIZEN DINNER

On Saturday, November 17, 1990 from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m., Herbert Porter Post #10057, American Legion Peter Gun Post #10 and That's What Friends Are For "Keep Hope alive" will host a Senior Citizen Dinner.

The dinner will be hosted by the Herbert Porter Post #10057, 1905 North H Street. This affair is free to all Senior citizens.

They look forward to serving the senior citizens at this dinner.

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