

Defense and Disease

Nurses in the Spanish American War

RESOURCE PACKET



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MEMORIAL





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Name:

Activity 1 • Document 1

Rose Heavren, Speech delivered March 28, 1950

Rose Heavren served at Camp Wikoff at Montauk Point, Long Island, New York, and in Cuba. While in Cuba, she nursed at the Las Animas Hospital and was the Chief Nurse supervising 15 nurses at Cabana Barracks in Santiago.

The boys were dying so fast from Typhoid, amoebic dysentery, malaria and yellow fever that they opened Camp Hospitals for them in different parts of the States.

I was first stationed at a Camp Hospital at Montauk Point, Long Island. This was no place for a hospital. It was on a one track railroad from New York and situated about two miles from the railroad and the ambulances, drawn by mules, had to carry the the men up hill and down dale this distance. It was not possible to get enough supplies of any kind. We were supposed to give our patients milk every two hours but there was only enough milk to give them some about four times in the 24 hours. We were always running out of medicine.

At one time we had about 1500 patients at this hospital. [...] They were such a fine lot of boys that it was very sad to think we could do so little for them.

One boat load of boys arrived at Montauk in such poor shape that nine died on the way from the boat to the hospital. [...] We were caring for boys who had gone into the service to fight but were stricken with disease and more than one dying from yellow fever said that it was mighty hard to die from fever. [...]

[...] We went on duty at 5 a.m. and worked until about 8 p.m.

We worked from 5 o'clock until about 8 o'clock without food of any kind, and when we went to breakfast we would get black coffee and some kind of mush, Indian meal [sic] oat meal, then back to work. I remember one dinner I went to when there was nothing but boiled cabbage and black coffee. [...]

The nurses were paid \$30.00 a month and when sent to a foreign country we were paid \$40.00 a month. We had to pay for our laundry and pay \$10.00 a month to supplement our mess or get only half enough to eat [...]

Later when I was at a small hospital in Havana, Cuba, I had the responsibility of the patients diets. We were only allowed to spend 23¢ a day for each man. We had about 100 [patients]. On this 23¢ a day we were allowed a ration of meat once a week and I would have made that into a vegetable soup [...] Our boys never tasted a drop of fresh milk all the while they were in Cuba. When I was recovering from yellow fever I had fresh milk because a quart a day was ordered for me ...



Name:

Activity 1 • Document 1_{continued}

Rose Heavren, Speech delivered March 28, 1950

Using Rose Heavren’s account, fill in the chart with details about the conditions that patients and nurses faced at the hospital camps. Once you’re done, work with a student assigned Document 2 to compare charts. You will use information from both charts to answer the questions.

Conditions for Patients	Conditions for Nurses
Location of Hospital	Work Demands
Living Quarters	Supplies
Medical Care	Risks
Diet	Diet

Name:

Activity 1 • Document 2

Kittie (Whiting) Eastman Doxsee note written August 20, 1898 & memoirs read July 1899.

Kittie (Whiting) Eastman Doxsee served at Camp Wikoff at Montauk Point, Long Island, New York, and in Cuba.

[] The Hospital at Montauk was built on Sand Dunes, a long wide board walk and wards, & tents long on both sides of board walk. I was assigned to night duty on Ward F where there were more patients than we had beds. [] One tent in ward was typhoid patients and I in the tent. Most other patients were Malaria in worst form and Dysentery cases. It was impossible to do justice to any patients as we did not have materials to work with. One nurse could not give attention to so many!

The Mess Hall was a place never to be forgotten. [] Doctors, officers, nurses, hospital corps men, sisters, and undertakers and all others glad to get served any old way and time. To me Montauk Hospital and the whole camp was like a bad dream. I had to use surgical shirts for sheets and improvise many others.

The water supply was inadequate and we were unable to get enough to give the much needed baths. No laundry work done for days and soiled clothes were piled up by hay rack [] I sent two bundles of my personal laundry, an official order and never did see them again. Was obliged to get new supply in N.Y. when enroute to Lexington, Ky where four other nurses and I were transferred for duty.

Name: 

Activity 1 • Document 2 continued

Kittie (Whiting) Eastman Doxsee note written August 20, 1898 & memoirs read July 1899.

[...] Reached Montauk about noon. There were many soldiers waiting for the hospital train to convey them to their homes and friends. Some who were not strong enough to sit up but were lying on rough benches as the station was temporary and made of rough lumber. Here is where our first work began in trying to make them more comfortable by using fur wraps for pillows and carrying milk and water from a nearby canteen. [...]

We were conveyed to camp in army ambulances drawn by 4 good mules. [...] I was assigned to Ward F where there were 60 patients with Malaria, some Pneumonia, and Typhoid, but more cases of Dysentery.

[...] We were all quartered in tents, no buildings had been erected. [...] I remained there about 4 weeks when the call came for more nurses for duty in Lexington, Kentucky. This being an inland town very few nurses cared to go as many were anxious to see foreign service—go to Cuba, Puerto Rico or Philippines. [...] I had no desire to go to Cuba or any place away from U.S.A. so I offered to go. [At the Lexington camp] Hospital corps boys were taking care of the sick some of them were very capable while some of them were better driving mules or working with pick and shovel than caring for the sick. [...]

Christmas Day we received orders to be ready on the 26th at 8 A.M. to be ready to leave for Cuba [...]. They expressed a desire to have Uncle Sam's nurses in their hospital. We remained in Cienfuegos over four months ...

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Name:

Activity 1 • Document 2

Kittie (Whiting) Eastman Doxsee note written August 20, 1898 & memoirs read July 1899.

Using Kittie (Whiting) Eastman Doxsee’s account, fill in the chart with details about the conditions that patients and nurses faced at the hospital camps. Once you’re done, work with a student assigned Document 1 to compare charts. You will use information from both charts to answer the questions.

Conditions for Patients	Conditions for Nurses
Location of Hospital	Work Demands
Living Quarters	Supplies
Medical Care	Risks
Diet	Diet

Name:

Activity 1 • Document 3

Report on the employment of nurses at military hospitals at Montauk Point, Long Island, New York, and Fortress Monroe, Virginia.



Kittie (Whiting) Eastman Doxsee
MWM Collection

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The late war, short as it was, showed the inestimable value of the trained nurses on field, on shipboard, and in the hospital. [...] Montauk Point will long be remembered by many a soldier, not only for the hardships which he suffered, but for the attention which he received from those women who gave him renewed life when literally at death's door.

[...] The corps of army surgeons in charge, were men of ability, and it is only fair to say that they worked hard, and gave their skill and attention as far as they were able. But the physicians themselves have said that without the nurses, the record would have contained many more fatalities [...]

[...] The regulars and volunteers after their term of service in the West Indies, and exposure to its climate, often prostrated by weeks of fever,

with only the attention which they received from comrades unskilled in ministrations to the sick, fully realized the work of the nurses at Fortress Monroe. [...] Everywhere the nurses gave evidence of a womanly sympathy in connection with their professional skill, and possibly the effect of these restoratives, if they can be called such, assisted in the ultimate recovery of many cases considered hopeless.

[...] And it can be said without exception, that they cheerfully endured many hardships and discomforts from the time they entered the work, losing all idea of self in devotion to their accepted calling...”

From *The Trained Nurse and Hospital Review*.



Courtyard, General Hospital, Santiago, Cuba

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Notes

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