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Made to Fit a Woman: Riding Uniforms of the Frontier Nursing Service

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by Donna Parker

The word "hello," so familiar to all Frontier nurses, sounded under my window at Hyden and fetched me out to a midwifery case way over the mountain in the middle of a dark night.

The man who came for me had no mule, and, as my patient had sent word for me to hurry, I left him behind with instructions to follow my trail. It is one of our few rules that no nurse rides alone at night, but I knew the man would never be far behind and we nurses are safe. Our uniform allows us to go anywhere in the mountains, and it is only fear of accident which prevents our riding alone at night.

Betty Lester, "What Stopped Raven?"

Betty Lester's summons on that 1936 night mirrored those received by many Frontier Nursing Service nurse-midwives in the eastern Kentucky mountains. Riding into the darkness, Lester felt confident that recognition of her uniform would provide protection for her and her fellow nurses. The unique riding uniform of the Frontier Nursing Service, founded by Mary Carson Breckinridge in 1925, became a symbol of an important work. To the people, the uniformed nurse meant professional health care -- something desperately needed and practically nonexistent in the area. To the nurse-midwife, who rode the trails delivering babies and ministering to the sick, the uniform symbolized a spirit of service which permeated the nursing field.¹ The uniform, like other occupational dress, unified the group and effectively conveyed a powerful image of the nurse as an authority figure and a professional.²

The uniformed nurse was not a twentieth-century concept. Hospital nurses in sixteenth-century London maintained a "*livery*," or uniform, distinctive to their position. As the quality of care declined throughout the next 250 years the nursing garb was abandoned. Only with Florence Nightingale in the mid-nineteenth century did the nurse in uniform return.³ Even then, standard dress for all nurses was not generally adopted until training schools professionalized nursing in the late-nineteenth century.⁴ In the 1870s the New York Training School for Nurses at Bellevue Hospital required regulation dress for its students; other training schools followed suit by the 1890s. As each graduate wore the school's uniform, cap, and pin to her place of employment, the apparel became recognized and associated with the school's

reputation. The costume assured patients that their nurse was a trained professional, not a common domestic.

During World War I, as the military utilized trained nurses on the battlefield and in army hospitals, a new nursing uniform emerged.⁵ Patterned after women's civilian suits and soldiers' dress, the nursing corps service uniform consisted of a mannish military jacket, white blouse and tie, ankle-length skirt, and either an overseas or a wide-brimmed hat.⁶ Women at home also needed practical clothing. As men were called to war, women replaced them in vacated jobs.⁷ The new labor force wore mannish clothing (e.g., military-styled uniforms, ties, trousers, overalls, caps, and boots) while doing their work.⁸ Women, supporting the war effort as volunteers in service organizations, such as the American Red Cross, often wore apparel similar to the nursing corps.⁹ Mary Breckinridge, one of these volunteers, dressed this way while working in northern France with the American Committee for Devastated France, a relief agency commonly known as CARD (an acronym for the group's French name -- Comite Americain pour les Regions Devastees de la France).¹⁰ CARD adopted for its uniform's color the horizon blue of the French Army's dress.¹¹ A photograph (Figure 1) of Breckinridge (seated, 3rd from right), with colleagues, pictures her in the CARD uniform. The group's clothing shows the prevalent style of relief workers' dress worn during and after the war.

MARY CARSON BRECKINRIDGE

Born into one of the South's most prominent and service-minded families in 1881, Mary Breckinridge spent her youth in Washington D.C. and abroad.¹² Breckinridge learned of the plight of Kentucky's mountain children from her great-aunt, Mrs. James Lees, who personally financed the education of countless Appalachian children. She spent hours listening to "Grandmother Lees" read letters from the children she had helped. A family tradition of public service, childhood experiences, and personal tragedy determined the final course of Breckinridge's life. Even at a young age she yearned to find a purpose for her daily occupations:

Much as I loved my people and . . . enjoyed the life I led . . . I

chafed at the complete lack of purpose in the things I was allowed to do. Several times I suggested to my mother that it would be nice to do something useful, but I never got anywhere with such an idea. I could range freely and read deeply. That was considered enough until I made up my mind whom I wanted to marry, and this I didn't do right away.¹³

Breckinridge followed the prescribed course for young, southern women at the turn-of-the-century and married in 1904. Within two years her husband died. The desire to serve others prompted enrollment in St. Luke's Hospital School of Nursing in New York.¹⁴ After graduation in 1910, she succumbed to the "pull" of her family and spent the following year nursing her mother and caring for the house. Her second marriage, in 1912, ended in divorce following the deaths of the couple's daughter and son. Their deaths became a driving force behind Breckinridge. While volunteering in war-torn France with CARD, she wrote: "when the longing for my own babies gets most unbearable, it does help me to remember that I can do for others what I could not do for my own." Her labor with French women and children propelled Breckinridge towards her life's work. Additional training in midwifery prepared her to work with expectant mothers and their families, and in 1925 established the Frontier Nursing Service.¹⁵

THE FRONTIER NURSING SERVICE

Several factors motivated Breckinridge to establish the Frontier Nursing Service in eastern Kentucky. She first sought a remote region for her rural-based, health demonstration. If successful there, she felt it could be duplicated anywhere. Also, the image, perpetuated by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers, of the pure Anglo-Saxon mountaineer - poverty stricken and needy - convinced Breckinridge, like many others, to aid these people. Finally, the support of the state health commissioner, family, and friends persuaded her to locate in Kentucky.¹⁶

Staffed by Breckinridge and two nurse-midwives, a small house in Hyden, Kentucky, functioned as the first clinic serving a fifty square mile district. By 1932 the FNS, as it was commonly known, expanded the service area to encompass seven hundred square miles of territory, boasting of nine nursing centers, thirty trained nurse-midwives, a medical doctor, and an eighteen-bed hospital.¹⁷ Based at each center were two nurse-midwives assigned to a district of roughly one hundred square mile who sought out

and registered expectant mothers in a maternity-care program. As nurses gained the people's confidence, they soon replaced local midwives (Figure 2). Nurses also provided health care to entire families.

At the turn-of-the-century a national movement in public-health nursing had taken root. The public-health nurse worked towards improving the community's health by conducting surveys and inspections, administering doctor-prescribed treatments and medicines, conducting clinics, and providing education to the people. The Frontier Nursing Service was a practical demonstration aimed at improving health conditions in the rural community. Because of the combined midwifery, general nursing, and public-health training, the FNS demonstrated the nurse's expanded role in a rural-based health-care program.¹⁸

In Kentucky's most isolated counties nurses rode horseback over mountainous terrain making district rounds and midwifery calls. Guiding their animals over narrow paths and up rocky creek beds, they faced the frequent hazards of night riding, precarious swinging bridges, icy trails, rainstorms, quicksand, floods, skittish horses, and snakebite. When necessary, nurses transported patients - first by horseback, then by rail - from their homes to Hyden, Lexington, Louisville, or Cincinnati for further medical treatment. They organized the neighborhood men to carry very ill patients, on makeshift stretchers, over miles of rugged terrain. The men's willingness to follow the nurse's instructions illustrated their acceptance of her as an authority figure. The nurse's uniform reinforced this image (Figure 3).¹⁹

In the organization's infancy nurses donned cloche hats and contemporary "riding togs" to go about their work.²⁰ A general acceptance of riding astride in the 1920s freed the modern horsewoman to wear the traditional style of men's riding clothes. Proper equestrian apparel, it was thought, should be practical, providing both protection, comfort, and safety.²¹ This was particularly true for the FNS dress since horses provided transportation. Occupational dress must also be suitable for the worker, as well as suited to the activity.²² Because of the nature of their job, nurses needed a sensible uniform that conveyed the image of a self-assured, trained nurse. The uniform's role in developing this image was as important as its practicality. By 1928 the Service adopted a summer and winter riding uniform for its nursing corps.²³

Women's sportswear influenced the first summer uniform's design. The winter uniform was patterned after Breckinridge's CARD apparel.

WINTER RIDING UNIFORM

When organizing the FNS, Breckinridge remembered her years in post-war France. The concepts of district nursing, trained midwives, military discipline, and uniforms were all borrowed from CARD.²⁴

During her tenure as director, Breckinridge maintained full control of the FNS and her nurses. As one nurse indicated, a military air existed within the Frontier Nursing Service:

We all [the nurses] . . . thought of her [Breckinridge] as the commander in chief . . . We had to be . . . beyond reproach . . . to remember that we were nurses. We did not smoke in people's houses, we did not drink . . . we had to remember we were in the Frontier Nursing Service . . . [and] not let the Service down . . . We were very careful about that.²⁵

Nothing gave the appearance of a military organization more than the winter riding uniform.

Reminiscent of Breckinridge's overseas garb, the FNS uniform was military in styling, differing primarily in the exchange of skirts for breeches (Figure 4). The hip-length coat fastened with a front-button closure and sported a medium-size collar and notched lapels. A self-fabric belt, characteristic of early twentieth-century clothing, buttoned over the coat. Large envelope pockets expanded when opened. A center back vent permitted the coat's skirt to spread as the nurse sat astride her horse. Nurses wore the tailor-made jacket and breeches with a white riding shirt, black four-in-hand tie, overseas cap, and knee-high boots. A comparison of the CARD uniforms, (Figure 2) and the FNS uniforms (Figure 4) reveals the similarities in the jacket, shirt and tie, headgear, and footwear. The Frontier Nursing Service replaced the CARD insignia with the letters "F.N.S" embroidered in black on a self-fabric patch sewn to the upper portion of the left sleeve.

The FNS uniform's most striking and memorable features was its horizon-blue, or blue-grey color adopted from the CARD uniform. Like CARD apparel and Red Cross service uniforms, the FNS dress provided both instant recognition and protection for its wearer.²⁶ One FNS nurse-midwife explained: "We

had our blue-grey uniform and everybody knew us, they wouldn't do a thing to harm us, in fact, they'd help us all they could."²⁷

The success of the Frontier Nursing Service depended largely on residents' involvement and support. Breckinridge organized local committees to assist with each district's work. Whether it be building nursing centers, clearing roads, or organizing sewing circles local committee cooperation was invaluable. As the people worked with FNS employees – as they came to know them and recognize their competence - the FNS soon gained the people's trust. The uniform identified the FNS employee and gave nurse-midwives the ability to move freely among the closed mountain community.

Properly attired nurses (Figure 5) represented the high standards of the Service to both the public and FNS personnel. Breckinridge recognized that a uniformed nurse reinforced the FNS's positive image. One nurse recalled: "Mrs. Breckinridge was adamant about . . . our uniforms. We had to be in full uniform."

Remembering an incident involving several FNS staff members, she again commented:

Peacock and Willeford [assistant directors] . . . went up a creek, and there was a nurse coming along, and she was wearing a green shirt instead of the white, FNS shirt we had. Well, of course, that went straight back to Mrs. Breckinridge. We were all on the mat, everyone of us. . . [and] told in no uncertain terms that we did not go to anybody's house . . . we did not go out in uniform unless it was absolutely perfect . . . It had to be full uniform, and nobody must ever do anything to . . . put it on the wrong level.²⁸

The superiority of the nurse's work and the correct presentation of the uniform were closely tied together in Breckinridge's mind.²⁹

Because they "saved a lot of lives" FNS nurses were proud of their midwifery work in the Kentucky mountains. Driven to excellence by Breckinridge, nurses dedicated themselves to the work. One nurse remembered the founder as a "perfectionist herself . . . she did expect the best [of the nurses] . . . to do our work properly and we did . . . everything about her sort of gave us that incentive . . . We were proud of our uniform and we wore it very proudly."³⁰ The uniform represented a satisfaction in her accomplishments.

Of course, it did not mean all nurses wore their uniforms correctly. Nurse-midwife Nancy O'Driscoll (Figure 6), when asked the reason she carried, but never wore, her service cap, replied: "Oh . . . I think the

world of my fine cap. I just don't want it on my head." A fellow nurse explained: "She had lovely red hair and she liked to let the wind . . . blow it about."³¹

Several stores, including Gimbel Brothers in New York and Meyers Brothers of Lexington, Kentucky, manufactured the sturdy FNS uniforms. In 1930, Gimbel Brothers supplied breeches "more feminine . . . and [which] fit better in the seats" than those FNS had previously purchased from a "military taylor." Worn inside either black leather riding or front-laced boots, breeches buttoned or laced from mid-calf to the knee. The nurse paid \$32.00 for jacket, breeches, and matching overseas cap.³²

The FNS staff travelled to Lexington for fittings. In 1931, the owner of Meyers Brothers, a department store which specialized in riding apparel and sportswear, asked "the nurses and secretaries . . . to stop in and let him get their measurements." In the earlier years, the secretarial staff wore a brown FNS riding uniform. Meyers' garments were constructed of "genuine whipcord, with genuine buckskin reinforcements, [and] made to fit a woman."³³

The Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort owns winter uniform clothing of Mary Breckinridge. One of several FNS garments in the collection, a beautifully constructed coat of flecked, blue-grey wool shows little wear. The manufacturer's label, sewn into the fully-lined jacket, confirms the garment came from Meyers. Breckinridge's FNS white riding shirt, accompanied by a black four-in-hand tie, exhibits yellowed stains indicating a great deal of use. Her black riding boots were manufactured by Church & Co., Ltd. of Northampton, England.³⁴

Though the nurse could purchase any white riding shirt, the FNS made three styles available through Gimbel Brothers in 1931. Made of imported broadcloth, Viyella flannel, and radium silk, the shirts cost \$4.50, \$6.50, and \$6.75, respectively. They were described as being made of "the very best grade of materials . . . the finest and most durable, and the style is perfect - - [a] woman's plain riding shirt with convertible collar." The shirt's left sleeve exhibited the FNS insignia. A black four-in-hand tie, held in place with a tie clasp or nursing pin, accessorized the nursing outfit.³⁵

The Frontier Nursing Service adopted two styles of sweaters for winter wear. A 1930 memorandum described the sweaters as:

both gray, all wool, very warm, of a very fine quality, and both slip-over. One is a Byron sweater with long sleeves and roll collar, high neck; the other . . . has a V-neck and is sleeveless. . . . The cost of the high neck, long sleeve one is \$5.50, and the cost of the sleeveless one \$2.95.³⁶

Layering the sweaters with other garments, the nurse added "long underwear," knee-high patterned socks, and thickly-knit mittens.³⁷

FNS required nurse-midwives to purchase the organization's uniform with its prescribed outerwear and accessories. Garments were of good quality, but rather costly. In 1930 nurses spent approximately \$110.00 to outfit themselves in both winter and summer apparel. They earned a salary of \$150.00 per month.³⁸ When styles changed, the Service allowed nurses to wear their old uniforms until beyond use. Those who purchased the new uniform could sell to the agency "their old ones for \$10.00 for coat and trousers if in wearable condition." Relief nurses and new employees used the outdated garb as temporary dress. Rules were strict regarding the disposal of old uniforms. No nurse could "DISPOSE OF HER UNIFORM TO ANYONE OUTSIDE OF THE SERVICE."³⁹ The FNS no doubt foresaw the need to preserve its public image by restricting the use of their uniform by outsiders whose actions were beyond control.

The FNS uniform reinforced the nurse-midwife a sense of identity and purpose, and promoted a feeling of unity among the staff. Although distance between nursing centers prevented district nurses from regularly seeing FNS personnel, and Breckinridge's reserve kept staff from developing a personal intimacy with her, the Frontier Nursing Service was, in many ways, a family. With few opportunities for outside recreation, socializing was typically done within the organization. Nurses tended to be nursing school graduates or missionaries seeking additional training. Some made the FNS work their lifetime calling. Though Breckinridge spoke little of her private life, she always listened to and discussed nurse's problems. The FNS staff were bound together by one thing -- a mission to save lives. The uniform meant belonging to this family and team. Recalling her first days with the FNS, one nurse wrote:

Proudly, . . . I struggled into the new winter uniform which had met me in Lexington - that uniform which I had been told would be horizon blue, but which, Doctor Hunt assured me with glee, was Confederate

grey. Did all of her merriment come from seeing a Yankee in the Confederate color [?] . . . it was good to have found friends to laugh with, good, to be at last in the Kentucky mountains.⁴⁰

UNIFORM OUTERWEAR

In 1930 the Frontier Nursing Service chose a leather topcoat for winter wear. The riding coat, costing \$28.00 through Gimbel Brothers, came: “wholly interlined, very soft, very comfortable, and [was] beautiful as a coat aside from its purpose as part of the uniform.”⁴¹ The following year, Meyers supplied to the Service a double-breasted topcoat for the price of \$32.50.⁴² Probably because of the coat's expense, the Service allowed nurses to wear their own leather coats until they wore out.⁴³

FNS patterned its uniform raincoat (Figure 7) after the style used by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Reaching in length to mid-calf, the blue-grey rubber coat, cape, and hood protected the nurse from snow and rain. Made to order by the U.S. Rubber Company, it cost \$11.00 in 1930.⁴⁴ Rain hats, worn with these coats, covered the bobbed and shingled hair of the nurse-midwives. Nurses wore the raincoats in both the winter and summer.

SUMMER RIDING UNIFORM

By 1928, FNS outfitted its nursing corps in its first summer uniforms fashionably styled after contemporary sportswear like that shown in a 1923 *Sears, Roebuck & Co. Catalog* illustration (Figure 8). The Sears' knicker outfit (left) is almost identical to the first FNS summer uniform (Figure 9). Both the sportswear and uniform consisted of a loosely-fitted, sleeveless jacket with narrow lapels extending to the jackets' hem. A hip-slung belt fastened over the jacket worn stylishly open. Fashionable knickers, cotton hose, oxfords and a panama hat completed each ensemble. In 1930 the summer riding uniform cost the nurse \$8.25.⁴⁵

FNS redesigned the summer uniform in 1940. Though records give no explanation for the change, it seems reasonable to assume the uniform, so fashionable in the twenties, became outmoded and difficult to purchase by the late thirties. It may have been decided the summer uniform should more closely resemble

the winter one. In fact, the new sleeveless summer jacket was similar in cut to the winter coat.

Lapels disappeared, the belt was discarded, and smaller patch pockets replaced the large roomy ones.

Nurses exchanged their knickers and oxfords for breeches and riding boots. The riding uniforms of the Frontier Nursing Service altered little in the following twenty-five years.⁴⁶

The Kentucky Historical Society owns the early 1940s summer riding uniform of nurse-midwife Ethel Broughall (Figure 10). Broughall joined the Frontier Nursing Service in 1940 as a hospital nurse. In 1941 she completed the midwifery program at the Frontier Graduate School of Midwifery, a FNS training school, and continued to work for the Service as a nurse-midwife until 1943.⁴⁷ Broughall's garment was sturdily made of cotton gabardine, with seams bound with cotton bias tape. A self-fabric facing finishes the neck and front opening of the blue, unlined jacket. The armseye, bound with bias tape, is turned under and topstitched rather than faced. Both jacket and riding breeches bear Meyers' manufacturer's label. The breeches differ little from contemporary riding pants. A wide waistband keeps the shirt tucked in pants which close with a side zipper and two buttons. The pant legs button snugly over the calf. A tag bearing Broughall's name is stitched into both jacket and breeches, probably for identification during laundering. Although stained, the outfit shows little deterioration of the sturdy fabric or its construction.⁴⁸

War shortages affected the availability of uniform cloth in the 1940s. The 1947 Spring issue of the FNS bulletin explained that the Service urgently needed: "NURSES' SUMMER UNIFORMS . . . Since 1942 we have not been able to obtain cloth in the color of our uniform. We have patched until the skin shows through, and substituted with ragtags and bobtails." The Service asked for \$948.00 to purchase four dozen new uniforms.⁴⁹ In the following two years, FNS spent \$3,244.36 replenishing its stock.⁵⁰

Frontier nurses carried forty-two-pound saddlebags stocked with medical equipment and supplies (Figure 11). The nurse-midwife was responsible for cleaning and repacking the two pair of saddlebags, one for district nursing and the other for home deliveries.⁵¹ Bags were carefully packed to distribute their weight evenly across the horse's back for: "a bad back on a horse in the Frontier Nursing Service has always been the same kind of disgrace as a bad back on a patient in a hospital bed." FNS first used Army surplus saddlebags to hold medical supplies. Since these bags were too small to hold all the needed

equipment and medicines, Breckinridge soon found a mountain craftsman to fashion the larger ones “by hand, out of the softest and finest quality leather for \$13 a pair.”⁵² In 1945, unable to obtain leather due to war shortages, the craftsman made \$9.85 canvas saddlebags as a substitute for the leather ones which by now cost \$18.50.⁵³

To the mountain child the nurse, not the stork, brought the baby in their saddlebags. At each prenatal visit nurses answered questions from children eager to see their new baby brother or sister. On a home delivery case, the father’s delay in carrying the midwifery bags to the house produced a high level of anxiety in his offspring. One nurse recalled: “We waited, six pairs of eyes watching me. Something was amiss - no bags - no baby - because babies always come in saddlebags. . . . Soon six little faces lit up. . . . the bags, what a relief!”⁵⁴

Nurse-midwives wore either a white midwifery uniform or a white butcher’s apron over their riding clothes when attending a home delivery (Figure 12). The FNS nurses saved hundreds of mountain women’s lives delivering babies in some of the most primitive of conditions. Homes with no windows, lamp fuel, or candles were illuminated solely by fireplace light. Struggling under these conditions, one nurse, after both her flashlight and lantern failed, delivered a baby “by the light of matches.”⁵⁵

DEMISE OF THE RIDING UNIFORM

By the mid-1960s the Service determined that the riding uniform was no longer necessary. Jeeps had replaced horses and improved roads provided easy access to patient’s homes. The riding uniform outlived the founder by only a few years. Mary Breckinridge died on 15 May 1965. In a manner befitting a military service, nurses appeared at her funeral in full regalia to honor their leader. Betty Lester, nurse-midwife since 1928, wrote of the ceremony:

. . . dressed in her blue-grey winter uniform, she lay in state in the little Chapel . . . at a quarter to nine, the district nurses, in the riding clothes she loved, had assembled and the casket was closed. . . . Slowly the cortege wended its way from Hyden to the High School, the district nurses driving their jeeps and the white-clad hospital nurses in the station wagon. . . . her horse, saddle empty and boots reversed in the stirrups, took up his position behind the hearse. . . . Anne Cundle, in

her riding uniform, walked beside him.⁵⁶

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Based on long term FNS association, Lester concluded: “Mrs. Breckinridge would have loved it.”⁵⁷

To Breckinridge, the uniform reflected the ideals of the Frontier Nursing Service - excellence in nursing and an improved standard of health for rural America.

The riding uniform was discarded only after Breckinridge’s death.⁵⁸ The new uniform's design consisted of a coat, blouse, grey skirt, grey knee socks, and black oxfords. 1965-1968 FNS district records describe the new summer uniform as a “blue skirt and white blouse. . . . [and] black oxfords.” For awhile, riding uniform were still used as winter and summer dress.⁵⁹ By the mid-1970s, while a few still wore their uniform skirts and blouses, most nurses had switched to the more casual lab coat.⁶⁰

SUMMARY

The riding uniform of the Frontier Nursing Service conveyed a powerful image of the nurse-midwife as authority figure and professional. In the eastern Kentucky mountains the FNS nurse brought desperately needed health care to the people. Their distinctive, horizon-blue uniform provided instant recognition, and therefore protection, to the nurse-midwife who relied on local residents for help. The sensible, military-styled uniform reinforced the nurse’s authority and reassured patients of receiving expert care. The dress unified staff working towards a common goal making them feel like a family and team. Wearing her uniform proudly, the properly attired nurse represented the high standards and ideals of the Frontier Nursing Service.

¹Elizabeth Ewing, *Women in Uniform through the Centuries* (Towowa, NJ: Rowan and Littlefield, 1975), 18.

²Valerie Steele, “Dressing For Work,” In *Men and Women: Dressing the Part*, ed. Claudia Brush Kidwell and Valerie Steele (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 67, 79.

³Ewing, 18-19.

⁴Steele, 75.

⁵Philip A. Kalisch and Beatrice J. Kalisch, *The Advance of American Nursing*, 2d ed (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1986), 118-21, 328, 335-36.

⁶Colonel Robert H. Rankin, *Uniforms of the Army* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1967), 67-68; Colonel Julia O. Flikke, *Nurses in Action: The Story of the Army Nurse Corps* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1943), 119.

⁷ Maurine Weiner Greenwald, *Women, War, and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the United States* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 4.

⁸ Diana de Marly, *Working Dress: A History of Occupational Clothing* (New York: Holmes & Meiers, 1986), 151.

⁹ Mary D. Doering, "American Red Cross Uniforms," *Dress* 5 (1979), 40-41.

¹⁰ Anne G. Campbell, "Mary Breckinridge and the American Committee for Devastated France: The Foundations of the Frontier Nursing Service," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 82 (Summer 1984): 260, 263.

¹¹ Mary Breckinridge, *Wide Neighborhoods: A Story of the Frontier Nursing Service* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), 81.

¹² Carol Crowe-Carraco, "Mary Breckinridge and the Frontier Nursing Service," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 76 (July 1978): 179; James C. Klotter, *The Breckinridges of Kentucky: 1760-1981* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 250-51.

¹³ Breckinridge, 3, 4, 45.

¹⁴ Klotter, 251-53.

¹⁵ Breckinridge, 59, 94, 111-12.

¹⁶ Klotter, 258.

¹⁷ "Frontier Nursing Service Primer," *FNSQ* 8 (Summer 1932); 13.

¹⁸ Kalish and Kalish, 410, 418-20, 428-33.

¹⁹ Communication, explains Elizabeth Rouse in *Understanding Fashion* (Great Britain: BSP Professional Books, 1989), 15-16, is an important function of occupational dress. On one level, it may simply identify a person's job. On another, it might influence people's attitudes and actions towards the person doing that job. Steele in "Dressing for Work," 67-73, discusses how uniforms symbolizing power

and authority have a notable impact on behavior. FNS staff wore uniforms to proclaim professionalism and reinforce authority.

²⁰Breckinridge, 167.

²¹Juliana Albrecht, Jane Farrell-Beck, Geitel Winakor, "Function, Fashion, and Convention in American Women's Riding Costume, 1880-1930," *Dress* 14 (1988): 56.

²²Steele, 66.

²³B. Morrow to Nurses, 15 May 1930, Frontier Nursing Service Papers, University of Kentucky, hereinafter cited as FNS Papers (UK); Committee on Uniforms to Nurses, 28 June 1930, FNS Papers (UK).

²⁴Campbell, 264; Women's military uniforms in 1925 were probably not an influence on Breckinridge's outdoor uniform design. During peacetime years, between 1920 and 1940, army nurse wore civilian clothes in place of their dress uniforms. Flikke, 119.

²⁵Betty Lester, interview by Dale Deaton, 3 August 1978, tape recording 820H13 FNS 156, Frontier Nursing Service Oral History Collection, University of Kentucky, hereinafter cited as FNS Oral Histories (UK).

²⁶Campbell, 264; Doering, 39; Nancy Dammann, *A Social History of the Frontier Nursing Service* (Sun City, AZ: Social Change Press, 1982), 67.

²⁷Betty Lester, interview by Jonathan Fried, 3 March 1978, tape recording 780H146 FNS 06, FNS Oral Histories (UK).

²⁸Betty Lester, interview by Dale Deaton, 3 August 1978.

²⁹In the 1970s, with a wider choice of health-care providers, people became more critical of the FNS. Much of the reverence for the FNS nurse was lost. When nurses discarded uniforms for white lab coats and jeans, the community criticized them for being sloppily dressed. Dammann, 149.

³⁰Betty Lester, interview by Jonathan Fried, 3 March 1978.

³¹Ernest Poole, *Nurses on Horseback* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1932), 93.

³²Mary Breckinridge to Nurses, 1 August 1930, FNS Papers (UK).

³³Mary Breckinridge to Nurses and Secretaries, 4 April 1931, FNS Papers (UK).

³⁴FNS winter riding uniform jacket (#84.4.1), four-in-hand tie (#84.4.2), shirt (#84.4.3), and boots (#84.4.4), Museum Collection, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, hereinafter cited as KHS.

³⁵Breckinridge to Nurses, 1 August 1930.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Mildred Disbrow, "When the Stork Flew over Flackie," *FNSQ* 25 (Winter 1950): 5.

³⁸For the cost of a nurse's working apparel, a homemaker could purchase a 32-set of dinner china (\$14.24), a kitchen cabinet (\$37.45), a porcelain enamel gas range (\$38.50), and a bed, mattress, and coil springs (\$22.95). *Sears, Roebuck and Co. Catalogue*, Fall and Winter 1929-30 (Chicago: Sears, Roebuck and Co., 1929), 895, 924, 977, 1059.

³⁹Committee on Uniforms to Nurses, 28 June 1930.

⁴⁰Dorothy Farrar Buck, "The New Nurse-1928," *FNSQ* 24 (1949): 3.

⁴¹Mary Breckinridge to Nurses, 18 June 1930, FNS Papers (UK).

⁴²Breckinridge to Nurses and Secretaries, 4 April 1931.

⁴³Committee on Uniforms to Nurses, 28 June 1930.

⁴⁴Breckinridge to Nurses, 18 June 1930.

⁴⁵*Sears, Roebuck Catalogue*, Spring 1923 (Chicago: Sears, Roebuck and Co., 1923), 4; B. Morrow to Nurses, 15 May 1930.

⁴⁶Beverly Gordon in "Fossilized Fashion: 'Old Fashioned' Dress as a Symbol of a Separate Work-oriented Identity," *Dress* 13 (1987): 49-58, defines "fossilized fashion" as an "outmoded style that has become fixed." The FNS uniform qualifies as fossilized fashion. It changed little from its original design. Also, Breckinridge clung to the outmoded style she had worn while nursing in France.

⁴⁷"Field Notes," *FNSQ* 16 (Summer 1940): 68; "Field Notes," *FNSQ* 19 (Summer 1943): 79. Brougall, ,who live to age seventy-eight, never disposed of her FNS uniform; a strong indication of her attachment to the FNS.

⁴⁸FNS summer riding uniform jacket (#91.2.1) and breeches (#91.2.2), KHS.

⁴⁹"Urgent Needs," *FNSQ* 22 (Spring 1947): 37.

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- ⁵⁰“Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Frontier Nursing Service, Inc.,” *FNSQ* 24 (Summer 1948): 4;
“Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Frontier Nursing Service, Inc.,” *FNSQ* 25 (Summer 1949): 4.
- ⁵¹Vanda Summers, “Saddle-bag and Log Cabin Technique,” *FNSQ* 17 (Summer 1941): 17-19.
- ⁵²Breckinridge, 176.
- ⁵³“Urgent Needs,” *FNSQ* 20 (Spring 1945): 22; “Urgent Needs,” *FNSQ* 19 (Spring 1945): 24.
- ⁵⁴Rose Evans, “Rose Anna Came,” *FNSQ* 21 (Winter 1946): 6.
- ⁵⁵Edith Reeves Solenberger, “Nurses on Horseback,” *FNSQ* 19 (Winter 1944): 18-19.
- ⁵⁶Betty Lester, “The Trumpets Sounded,” *FNSQ* 40 (Spring 1965): 4.
- ⁵⁷*Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸Because of Breckinridge's fondness for the riding uniform she resisted major design changes. In 1946, the uniform committee recommended including culottes as alternate summer wear; a suggestion not taken. Only when Breckinridge resigned in 1961 did the FNS include the skirt as uniform clothing. Wendover Designing Shop to Assistant Director, 21 November 1946, FNS Papers (UK).
- ⁵⁹FNS Staff Meeting Minutes, 21 May 1964, FNS Papers (UK); 1965-1968 Beech Fork District Records, FNS Papers (UK).
- ⁶⁰Dammann, 149.

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