

Proposal Excerpts

Kimberly Jensen, Western Oregon University

“Esther Pohl Lovejoy, M.D.: Activist for Public Health, International Medical Relief, and Advocate for Women in Medicine”

Proposal for 2005-2006 Resident Research Fellowship, Francis C. Wood Institute for the History of Medicine, College of Physicians of Philadelphia

Oregon Physician Esther Clayson Pohl Lovejoy (1869-1967) shaped an influential and consequential life of public service as a public health pioneer and policymaker, suffrage activist, congressional candidate, historian of women in medicine, and as an organizer and director of international networks among women physicians to provide global medical relief. Born in a logging camp in Seabeck, Washington Territory in 1869, Lovejoy graduated from the University of Oregon Medical School in 1894, served as Portland, Oregon’s public health officer from 1907-1909, campaigned for woman suffrage in Oregon in 1906 and 1912, and ran for Congress in 1920 as the Democratic and Labor candidate from a Portland district. During the First World War Lovejoy went to France to study the public health needs of women and children and published the *House of the Good Neighbor* (1919) about her wartime experiences.

Lovejoy’s experiences in public health and during the World War contributed to her success in organizing and leading efforts among women physicians to establish international networks and cooperative activism in the postwar years. In 1919 Lovejoy agreed to take the chair of the American Women’s Hospitals, a medical relief service for civilians and refugees established by the Medical Women’s National Association during the war. Lovejoy developed an international vision for cooperation among medical women as an organizer and first president of the Medical Women’s International Association (1919-1924) president of the Medical Women’s National Association (1931-1932) and connected this vision to her career with the American Women’s Hospitals throughout her life. She published three additional book-length studies as a historian of women in medicine. They are *Certain Samaritans* (1927, 1933), a history of the medical relief work of the American Women’s Hospitals; *Women Physicians and Surgeons* (1939), a history of the American Women’s Hospitals and the Medical Women’s International Association; and *Women Doctors of the World* (1957), an international history of medical women and medical education.

Research Materials at the College of Physicians

Women’s Medical Journals: The *Woman’s Medical Journal*, (1893-1919) and the *Medical Woman’s Journal* (1921-1952) are vital sources for the history of women in medicine in this period. A close reading of the *Journal* provides valuable information on women’s medical research, education, political and social issues, and the professional, organizational, and personal lives of women physicians from the articles and reports of conferences to personal news sections and letters to the editor.

Medical Directories and Histories: I am building a demographic profile of women physicians and physicians as a group to provide a context for understanding Lovejoy's professional and organizational career in medicine. [Medical] directories provide information on medical education, year of graduation, professional affiliations and other data on the nation's women physicians (some 5,500 in 1918 and 7,000 in 1945). I need to have additional information on state and national statistics to make the interpretation of these databases effective.

Research Materials at the Archives and Special Collections on Women in Medicine and Homeopathy at Drexel University College of Medicine

I wish to revisit the American Women's Hospitals collection, including Executive Committee minutes after 1924 and files on individual medical women with whom Lovejoy worked in the AWH and the Medical Women's International Association. I also will undertake a close reading of the *Medical Women's International Journal* (the Archives has volumes 9-16, 18-23 covering 1925-1963).