



CHAPTER

3

The Study of Nursing

RESEARCH AND HISTORICAL SOURCES

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Research: Seeking Historical Information

CONDUCTING HISTORICAL RESEARCH REQUIRES DIFFERENT techniques and strategies than might be used in a qualitative or quantitative research effort associated with more present concerns or hypotheses. The most obvious difference, of course, would be that of time, as historical research requires actual familiarity with journals, documents, books, relics, or artifacts of the past. The nurse researcher needs to find as many original (primary) sources as possible, similar to the methodology of a literature review for a project, dissertation, journal article, or meta-analysis of existing knowledge on a particular subject. The scholar finds historical evidence such as diaries, letters, digitized compilations of images, existing antique publications, video or audio recordings, and/or handwritten documents.

The procedure of acquisition, analysis, interpretation, and verification requires that not only the specific document is reviewed but that other documents from the same era/context are attained to verify or substantiate consistencies or inconsistencies in the material. It requires attention to facts and details as well as consideration of the original context of the material and the reliability of the source. It compels the historian to understand his or her current perspective(s), including personal, professional, and societal bias(es), and how these viewpoints might affect interpretation of the historical material procured (Hacker & Fister, n.d.).

A study was sanctioned by the American Nurses Association (ANA) in 1950 to assess, document, and enable an understanding of

nursing functions in various settings and geographic locations and nurses' relationships with coworkers and associates . . . this scholarly look at the profession included surveys, interviews, attitude-relationship studies, observation [shadow study] on the job, classification of activities, and time analyses . . . researchers learned that nurses performed more than 400 functions . . . [this study allowed nursing] to increase public knowledge and understanding of professional nursing and the art and sciences on which the health of the American people depend. (Kalisch & Kalisch, 2004, pp. 385–386)

Historical research, as well as work from the current era, validates nursing work and supports evidence-based practice as it becomes history tomorrow.

Critical to the process of historical research is appraisal of the information found and the relevancy to the historical question or narrative. The validity and reliability of any document must be established. Any assessment of validity and reliability utilizes the suggested criteria: (a) A primary source is usually deemed more reliable than a secondary source; (b) primary sources often are “what is remembered” and may not truly reflect all of the facts; (c) confirmation that the resource exemplifies information that is consistent with the appropriate time and/or person being researched; (d) ascertaining that the source really is what it appears

to be at first glance; and (e) a determination of authenticity involves document examination for handwriting samples, ink and paper genuineness, and for audiovisual materials, inspection of the recording to establish if it is appropriate for time period. If the resource is judged valid, reliability can be further investigated using internal criteria based on the researcher's awareness and knowledge of the time period and context of the individual or event being studied. Essential to evaluation is an understanding of general historical context combined with a balance of primary and secondary sources to establish that what is documented is indeed what it is presumed to be (Liehr & LoBiondo-Wood, 2006).



As this historical work evolved, the researchers/authors immersed themselves in documents and artifacts from the past, moving from one source to another, finding additional resources suggested by others in their work or through identification of specific concepts, events, etc., that were not previously fully developed. Following “clues” sanctioned further information be gleaned and evaluated. Secondary sources provide an outside perspective on events and individuals while often identifying primary sources that enable researchers to verify accuracy. Sources might include bibliographies, historical or nonfiction works, and periodical articles, all of which are usually published pieces. There are innumerable historical resources available to researchers. Today, digitized copies of journals, books, images, and other artifacts are readily available via the Internet or through designated curators of those archives and records. Hacker and Fister (n.d.) suggest that the investigator consider: (1) the religious, organizational, and/or political affiliation of the author/publisher; (2) the presence of biased language; (3) the logical nature of the information in the specific context; (4) the authority of the resource/source; (5) if qualifications/expertise are evident; and (6) currency of information and how it is revised based on the subject considered (such as with websites or other online sources). An important aspect of historical research is being able to understand the sociopolitical, scientific, and economic circumstances of the time period being studied (McGann, 1997).

A well-defined topic ensures the research process is controllable and avoids potentially unending and overwhelming literature/document searches. The nurse should judge if there is adequate and relevant existing material available, the relative ease of access to documents and research information, and the viability to proceed with a particular avenue of research (Burns & Grove, 2001). Whenever possible, a researcher should select a topic of personal interest or passion, as historical research can involve significant expenditures of time, energy, and



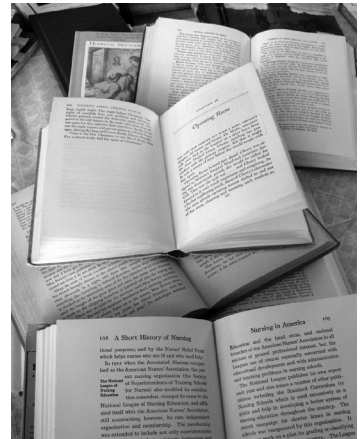
money. Sometimes distractions arise as the nurse researcher finds interesting information that is not so relevant to the particular objectives of the study; this can cause delays despite the information being reliable and accurate. The identified topic(s) should “be significant, with the potential to illuminate or place a new perspective on current questions, thus contributing to scholarly understanding and potential improved practice outcomes” (Lusk, 1997, p. 355).

Acquiring Information: Where Can It Be Found?

WHEN BEGINNING HISTORICAL RESEARCH, BROWSING a journal like *Nursing History Review* or acquiring old nursing books or manuals might inspire a more specific research topic. Some works that were used for this project were: *Notes on Nursing: What It Is and What It Is Not* (Florence Nightingale, 1860); *Hospital Sketches* (Louisa May Alcott, 1863); *No Time for Tears* (Lora Wood Hughes, 1946); *Hospital Days: Reminiscence of a Civil War Nurse* (Jane Stuart Woolsey, 1899); *Basic Principles of Nursing Care* (Virginia Henderson, 1960); *Nursing History in Brief* (Minnie Goodnow, 1938); *No Time for Prejudice* (Mabel Keaton Staupers, 1961); *Cadet Nurse Stories* (Thelma M. Robinson, 2001); *Nurse in War* (Elizabeth Scanell-Desch and Mary Ellen Doherty, 2012); and *Men in Nursing* (Chad O’Lynn and Russell Tranbarger, 2007)

It is important to know where to search for historical material and how to utilize best strategies to enhance efficiency of the literature/document/artifact search. Nurses and students may be familiar with research projects, practice questions, and/or assignments using library catalogs and article databases. These can be accessed via organizational, academic, and public libraries; in most instances you can access library resources via an Internet connection. Historical researchers utilize these resources to locate relevant articles, archives, or special collections. The authors of this work identified several other resources that were useful in ascertaining pertinent information, images, stories, journals, diaries, and media. Findings from the resources are included in the book as Historical Happenings and imagery. The Historical Information and Resources section near the end of this chapter lists some useful organizations and websites where someone interested in historical information can find a variety of archival reserves. Librarians and curators are valuable resources for any kind of research, but especially for assistance with acquisition of antique materials. Library catalogs show details of inventory (books, collections, theses or dissertations, and other multimedia reserves) but require significant time to browse. There are many specialty library and archival sites that are beneficial for the historical researcher. Today *WorldCat* (<http://www.worldcat.org/>) is a resource where researchers gain access to the worldwide

library of materials via an Internet-connected computer anywhere. The search is similar to one done in person or online: By entering an author's name or the title of desired book, manuscript, article, or audio or video presentation, a search is done and the investigator is notified if it is available and where it is located. Once allocation is identified, an individual or a librarian can request the item. In many instances there are relationships with organizations to share and exchange holdings. If the item is not one that circulates, as is the case with many antique books, images, or articles, digital versions or photocopies can be sent. There may be charges associated with such a request if it needs to be scanned or digitized for the requester.



Because catalogues themselves only identify a book, article, or other item, it is necessary for the scholar to become familiar with other search tools such as the academic search premier, article databases, and/or electronic journals databases available for historical and health-related searches. Of course there are other nonhealth or nursing databases that can be accessed by subject or discipline. Prior to access to this technology, *The Reader's Guide to the Periodical Literature* was the best method to find printed information. Some potential databases available include: Medline, the most comprehensive literature database in the world (via PubMed or EBSCO interface); CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature); and HealthSource: Nursing/Academic Edition. Another beneficial journal/periodical database called JSTOR can provide access to archival records and primary sources that may date back to the 17th century. It has affiliations with an ever-expanding network of museums, archival libraries, and collections of "monographs, letters, oral histories, government documents, images, 3-D models, data, type specimens drawings, paintings, and more" (JSTOR, 2012, para. 1–3). Nursing Journals@Ovid is a reserve for nurse inquirers permitting retrieval of full-text articles along with cover-to-cover text in more than 20 respected scholarly journals. This database, moreover, provides visibility to the table of contents and citations for more than 1,200 biomedical e-journals.

Medline and PubMed have basic databases that are available free to the public; their comprehensive databases require an access fee or subscription. Affiliation with an academic institution or public library often permits researchers free admittance to one or more databases through a password or code. Each institution or organization has policies on the number of databases and availability of full-text articles. Depending on the library budget, some will have better services than others. Interlibrary loans are a useful strategy to acquire full-text articles from journals or other material for which the researcher does not have immediate access.



Basic Investigative Concepts

THERE ARE SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES associated with investigative searches regardless of whether it is at a physical library, an online library, an article database, or an Internet search. With electronic searches, complete sentences or research questions entered into a search box often overwhelm the search engine; most computer applications usually disregard common terms such as *of*, *the*, *in*, etc., since they occur in every document or article. Also, keep in mind that an increased number of words means more search responses to sort through. Selections of specific keywords identify important components of the hypothesis, research question, or project theme and refine the examination parameters. Consider the use of a thesaurus/synonym resource for alternative keywords. The designation of a time frame perfects the search. Several article databases utilize a medical subject heading or MeSH list based on a controlled vocabulary subject hierarchical list developed by the U.S. National Library of Medicine. It

consists of “broad headings such as “Anatomy or Mental Disorders” [and] more specific headings are found at more narrow labels of the hierarchy, such as “Ankle” and “Conduct Disorder” (U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2011). The stratagem for use of these terms is to pair them for best sorting/filtering of all available resources. One could even study the history of the history of historical research or another type of research.

Some databases use MeSH terminology and some do not; an individual can create his or her own MeSH search criteria for best success using the capitalized Boolean operators *AND*, *OR*, and *NOT*. For example, when undertaking a search, the investigator chooses two concept terms: (1) maternal health and (2) Lillian Wald. The search options

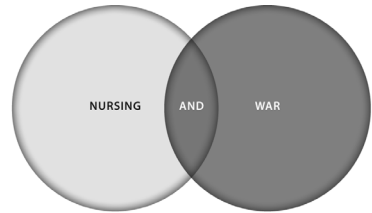


using Boolean operators then are as follows: (a) maternal health *AND* Lillian Wald, which would result in all resources that discuss or compare the two; (b) Lillian Wald *OR* maternal health, which identifies all articles about one or the other; and (c) maternal health *NOT* Lillian Wald, which would exclude maternal health records that contain information about Lillian Wald. Using the Boolean operator *NOT* in a different search with these two terms could be Lillian Wald *NOT* maternal health; in this instance, the search would yield information about Lillian Wald that excludes her work in maternal health.

Web search engines (like Google) automatically connect search terms with *AND*, meaning that the search results will include only the items that have all of the search terms in them. If the order of the terms matters, then quotation marks should be used to identify the specific phrase being search for, such as “Florence Nightingale.” This is known as *phrase searching*; in the example listed above with Lillian Wald and maternal health, quotation marks should be used to connote desired order, such as “Lillian Wald” and “maternal health,” to achieve an optimum search.

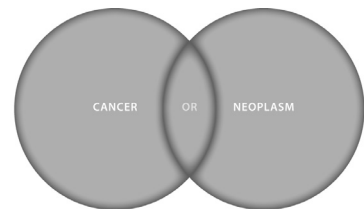
Using synonyms, phrases with quotation marks, and the Boolean operator *OR*, such as “bladder cancer” or “transitional cell carcinoma,” permits retrieval of all the relevant results, regardless of which term or phrase is used in the resource. To avoid missing relevant search terms, researchers can also use the database’s thesaurus or subject headings list as described earlier in this chapter.

Boolean operators are extremely useful when searching library catalogs and article databases, but Web search engines work a bit differently. Most search engines direct researchers to their advanced search pages to construct a similar search statement using text input boxes instead of the Boolean operators themselves. It is a good idea to become familiar with the advanced search features of several Web search engines (Davis, as cited in Judd, Sitzman, & Davis, 2009, p. 245).



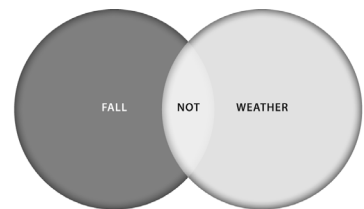
This Venn diagram illustrates results when searching for *nursing*, *war*, and *nursing and war*. Connecting keywords with *and* will retrieve fewer results than searching with a single keyword.

◆ Boolean operator “AND”



This Venn diagram illustrates results when searching for *cancer* or *neoplasm*. Connecting keywords with *or* will retrieve more results than searching for a single keyword.

◆ Boolean operator “OR”



This Venn diagram illustrates results when searching for *fall*, but not *fall* as it relates to the *weather*. The darker circle represents these results. Items that have both *fall* and *weather* will not show up in search results. This search will retrieve fewer results than if the search includes *fall* as a keyword.

◆ Boolean operator “NOT”

Many websites provide tutorials and support materials to familiarize you with their features and services. Don't be afraid to use help tools or do Internet searches; even YouTube can provide "hints" from those who have gleaned effective ways to research or use software to support writing and statistical analysis in nursing or any other discipline.

Research for this book required the authors to travel to locations where primary sources were available only for review onsite. Curators, docents, staff, and librarians were helpful in assisting with exploration of fragile documents and images. Many interesting primary sources and examples of past nursing or medical techniques were identified at a number of locations. Many of the images included in this book were found through face-to-face contact with curators.

With improving technology and widespread Internet usage, digital technology is advancing to the point where many historical documents and artifacts are available online at either archival centers or, in some cases, portions of the collections can be viewed electronically from the researcher's office or living room on a personal computer (PC) or laptop. The fragile characteristics of many primary and secondary resources and copyright laws determine the availability of materials and how they might be utilized. Some collections are transferred from one custodian to another depending on the ability to manage them, along with space and resources. If no one accesses these resources for decades or if there is no appropriate curator, historical information can be lost forever or even destroyed (McGann, 1997).

Historical Happenings

At the Smithsonian Archives, some old photographs and images of pamphlets or other written or printed works were digitized for ease of viewing and to prevent further decay associated with handling, light, humidity, and temperature. They were accessed using Smithsonian computers with a special onsite Internet connection. Other collections were preserved in special file boxes, with only one small box available at a time for inspection. Materials viewed were able to be photocopied or photographed for personal use with certain stipulations and fees. As the items were handled, the researcher was required to wear white cotton gloves to protect the fragile documents. One collection reviewed was the Warshaw Collection, available only at the archive center; it contained old medical pamphlets and sketches describing interesting ways of caring for diagnoses such as diphtheria, allergies, cancer, diabetes, etc. ♦

Web-Based Dialogue

WITH SIGNIFICANT WEB DEVELOPMENTS, SOCIAL networks, and the availability of web-sponsored catalogs and article databases, investigators can research more easily than in previous decades. There are nursing-specific electronic listservs, blogs, chats, and message boards connecting people with similar interests as research ideas are shared and networking is expanded such that a researcher never has to be alone if he or she chooses not to be. Ideas can be readily shared and feedback can be instantaneous, depending who is online and when. Colleagues support each other and share what they have gleaned with peers. As one participates in the conversation without cultural, physical, or time boundaries, collegial relationships will be formed and historical or clinical research will advance (Pravikoff & Levy, 2006).



Almost anyone can create a webpage or portal, so it behooves the researcher once again to ensure accuracy and reliability of information; establish who is responsible for the material; determine how the material is managed; understand how often is it updated; know who the experts/contributors on the subject/concept are; identify what, if any, bias or agenda is present; and finally, confirm that other sources are consistent with the content of the website in question. It should be noted that for historical information, updates will likely be less frequent than that of a site that provides clinical data and information. Many organizations provide frequent postings and/or distributions of important information to identified individuals with an interest; for example, the American Nurses Association and the National League for Nursing send out periodic messages on pertinent concerns for nurses.

Historical Information and You

EXPLORATION OF INFORMATION FROM A variety of sources, including printed journals and previously published books, as well as the wealth of information available as digital images and electronic text, allows for a better understanding of the nursing profession both then and now. In this historical work, pre-19th century nursing will be broadly discussed, and a narrower focus will be used during specific 20-year eras starting at the beginning of the 20th century. Each chapter begins with a timeline of some important events and a section entitled *Our Nursing Heritage: Key People*. A discussion of the *Sociopolitical Climate* reviews generally the context and how that might affect each of the seven nursing trends as they pertain

to our legacy. Although each trend aspect is modestly reviewed, any one idea or historical happening could be further researched or investigated. *Historical Happenings* are included throughout the book to help enliven facts and substantiate readers' understanding of what it might really have been like at a particular point in time. Trends and happenings related to advances in practice, workforce issues, licensure/regulation, nursing research and theory, educational advances, nursing roles, war and nursing, professional image, and other nursing concerns are identified. The history of nursing becomes the future of nursing; as nurses review this historical narrative, they might consider doing their own historical research on ideas presented or any one of the trends suggested in this history. It is important to remember that individual nurse happenings today might affect future nurses; if the story is not told, it will be forgotten or changed. Powerful inquiry and

the pattern of asking, seeking, and [resolving] are vital in obtaining the knowledge, the understanding, and the intelligence that are necessary for us to *know* what we need to know, to *live* as we should live, and to *become* what the [profession needs] us to become . . . Thus, understanding does not refer solely or even primarily to intellectual or cognitive comprehension. Rather, understanding occurs when what we know in our minds is confirmed as true in our hearts. (Bednar, 2011, pp. 119 & 133)

For nurses, this is both the science and art of nursing—from historical roots to our present-day prospects of caring with cognitive, scholarly, methodical, cultural, and holistic congruence.

Historical Exploration Resources

SEE THE WEB CONTENT THAT accompanies this text for a list of print and Internet resources related to conducting historical nursing research. This content is available through the publisher's catalog page for this book (<http://www.jblearning.com/catalog/9781449697204/>) or by visiting www.jblearning.com, keyword "Judd."

American Association for the History of Nursing, Inc.: Home Page. Retrieved from <http://www.aahn.org/>

American Association for the History of Nursing, Inc.: Archives, History Centers & Museums. Retrieved from <http://www.aahn.org/resources/centers.html>

American Nurses Association Nursing World: ANA Hall of Fame. Retrieved from <http://www.nursingworld.org/FunctionalMenuCategories/AboutANA/Honoring-Nurses/HallofFame>

- Best of History Websites: General History Resources. Retrieved from <http://www.besthistorysites.net/index.php/general-resources>
- Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center: History of Nursing Archives. Retrieved from <http://www.bu.edu/dbin/archives/index.php?pid=401&holdings=nursingarchive>
- Koshofer, N., & Schneider S. (2004). *A Matter of Life & Death: Magic Moments and Dark Hours in the History of Medicine*. Germany, Cologne: Gruppe 5 Filmproduktion Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR), German United Distributors. Information Retrieved from [http://www.german-films.de/film-archive/browse-archive/?cHash=73734d235e9d6d69c57da1d0c47ff296&film_id=1072&tx_movedb_pi2\[view\]=detail&cHash=1bf5a9713c3b19c6bdb1c0bcc941bc39&redirect=yes](http://www.german-films.de/film-archive/browse-archive/?cHash=73734d235e9d6d69c57da1d0c47ff296&film_id=1072&tx_movedb_pi2[view]=detail&cHash=1bf5a9713c3b19c6bdb1c0bcc941bc39&redirect=yes)
- Library of Congress: About Whitman's Notebooks. Retrieved from <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/whitman/wwntbks.html>
- Open Library. Retrieved from <http://openlibrary.org/>
- Penn Medicine: History of Pennsylvania Hospital. Retrieved from <http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/paharc/features/creation.html>
- Penn Nursing Science, Barbara Bates Archives and Collections. Retrieved from <http://www.nursing.upenn.edu/history/Pages/ArchivesandCollections.aspx>
- Penn Nursing Science, Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing. Retrieved from <http://www.nursing.upenn.edu/history/Pages/default.aspx>
- Smithsonian Institution Archives. Retrieved from <http://siarchives.si.edu/collections>
- University Archives: Artifacts, Letters & Relics. Accessed at <http://www.universityarchives.com/>
- U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health: History of Medicine Finding Aids Consortium. Retrieved from <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/consortium/index.html>
- Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc. Retrieved from <http://womensmemorial.org/H&C/h&cwelcome.html>
- Writers Write (The Internet Journal): Internet Research Resources for Historical Writers. Retrieved from <http://www.writerswrite.com/journal/mar99/gak13.htm>

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www



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