

Accession No. 119:

MARY FOWLER-THOMPSON, M.D. PAPERS

1893-1900

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ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ON WOMEN IN MEDICINE
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Provenance

The Mary Fowler-Thompson Papers were donated to the Archives and Special Collections on Women in Medicine by the Samuel Caplin Family of Los Angeles in 1979.

Mary Fowler-Thompson, M.D.

Originally from Minnesota, Mary Caroline Fowler graduated from the Woman's Medical College of Chicago in 1889.

In 1891, she went as a medical missionary to Burma where she practiced amongst the Karens. Her diary entry for December 30, 1893, reads: "Have been here just two years today. Have learned a great deal about the Karens in that time and there is much more for me to learn." Frequent references to her "s.s. class" (sunday school) and other observations of a religious nature, indicate that she was equally engaged in her evangelical activities as she was in her medical responsibilities. By 1900, Dr. "Fowler" had become Dr. "Fowler-Thompson." In her lecture before the Rangoon YMCA that year, she refers to herself as a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. A remnant from an envelope postmarked "4 JA 05," bears the address of Dr. Fowler-Thompson, "Acting Supedh.[?] & Resident Doctor, Dufferin Maternity Hospital, Mission Road, Rangoon."

The 1918 Census of Women Physicians listed "Mary F. Thompson" as retired and living in Eugene, Oregon. She appeared again in the 1945 and the 1949 Directory of Medical Women and was still living in Eugene Oregon. She retained an active interest in Burma, and was a member of the "Burma Rope Holders."

A descendant states that she was born in Newport, MN in 1864 to Caroline and William Fowler. See research request form, April 11, 2003, Gerald Fowler

1 Annual Announcement of the Woman's Medical Chicago, 1889. The responses to the 1910 survey of alumnae of in the Records of the WMCChicago (Northwestern University) do not include a response from Fowler-Thompson.

She was preceded in Rangoon by another graduate of WMCC, Marie M. Cote, M.D. who went to Burma in 1889 under the auspices of "the Women's Board" [of Foreign Missions?] but who left the Women's Board to take charge of the Dufferin Hospital in Burma. There is one on file for Marie Cote, as well as a letter, dated 1921, from Cote to Eliza Root.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection consists of four items (See contents list) pertaining to Dr. Fowler-Thompson's work in Burma.

Although another name, "K.W. Russell" appears in the fly-leaf of the diary, it has been assumed that the diary was Fowler-Thompson's. The diary entries commence November 8, 1893 and end January 30, 1897, with sporadic entries in between.

Entries describe medical cases and their treatment, as well as episodes highlighting her observations regarding differences in religion, social customs, etc. encountered by the woman missionary. References to her evangelical activities are almost as frequent as those to her medical practice; the two often coinciding. There are occasional references to forms of payments made by her patients and to the "folk" remedies used by them before consulting the Dr. or in lieu her prescriptions. The journal does not provide detailed information about the location of Fowler-Thompson's mission, the routine activities, her living environment, or the people with whom she most closely associated. At the back of the book are notes on vocabulary and phrases in an Asian language, possibly Tamil or Hindi.

PAPERS OF MARY FOWLER-THOMPSON, M.D.CONTENTS

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	1	A.L.S.: M[ary] C. Fowler to Captain Thompson	1893
	2	Clipping: "The YMCA" re Lecture of Dr. Fowler-Thompson before the YMCA of Rangoon, Burma in 1901	1900
	3	Journal of Mary Fowler-Thompson, M.D.	1893-1897
	4	Lecture: "Young Men as Others See Them," by Mary Fowler-Thompson, M.D., delivered before the YMCA of Rangoon, Burma	ca. 1900