

Hilda Crosby Standish

Interview

HCS: But some how or other, I decided I'd like then to go, as long as I hadn't married, I'd like to go and teach obstetrics in a mission field somewhere.

JB: Because that was your early vision for yourself to be a missionary.

HCS: I don't know how I got a five-year contract, but I did. And that was to include one year of language study up (north) in Peking. And we went right to Shanghai. We had to go by train across this country, (then it took) a week to (get to) Hawaii, (then) two weeks (to go) on to China via Japan, where we went through the inland sea and things like that. And then we were met at the Bund (landing area) in Shanghai in a little old Ford that belonged to the hospital and a couple members came and greeted me and we jogged off to the hospital. (9)

JB: I've read a number of your letters that are in the Schlesinger Library.

HCS: Well, I used to take notes. Every time I'd see something that was different, that appealed to me, I'd jot it down and at the end of each week I'd write a letter and include those things. Because you get there and you're startled by such things that you've never seen before (13).

HCS: I had learned to do blood transfusions at St. Louis Maternity, by a method that had been invented by Dr. T.K. Brown who was on staff there. We got...we did very well. We got along. I had a lot of patience. And I never thought of it as being unusual. But when I got to China...Oh, I'd ask his permission, if I could take two of the boxes that contained all of the things that were needed to do a transfusion, because it was a good sized box. That is the rubber tubing and the flasks and the needles and all the rest of it. And he said, "Certainly." So he had a couple of them fixed up for me. And I took those to China and so after I got there I said to the chief of the department (10), "Would you like to have me start trying transfusions?" And she said, "I'd love it." And we found very quickly that giving blood is the loss of spirit, so it took us some time to get anybody to give blood. And finally our gateman did. By offering a small amount of money that was more than a month's salary for him, well, he finally decided that maybe he would try it. And he did. But all of his friends stood outside the hospital while he was in, expecting that he would die. He came out waving this money that he had. Well, he thought, "That's a pretty good deal." So, very shortly we had to come down on the price we gave. But even a husband whose wife certainly would die if she didn't have a transfusion, she was bleeding profusely, would not give blood. His gateman could give, but not he.(14)

Oral History Excerpt (pgs 13-14). Interview of Dr. Hilda Crosby Standish. By Julie Bzenas for The Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame. November 18, 2002.

Activities

Reading/Writing/Speaking, Listening and Viewing/Working Independently

- Read the excerpt from Dr. Standish's Oral History interview. Create a travel journal of things you observe in a typical week that are both new and ordinary. Give a brief oral report about your experience.

Problem Solving/Reasoning and Creative Thinking/Writing

- Think of one thing you are not willing to try because it is new. Ask yourself these questions: Is it dangerous? Why/Why not? Write a paragraph persuading another person to try it, or, as Dr Standish did, create a good reason or incentive for someone to try it.

Working Independently

- What is your "early vision" for yourself? Using ordinary materials, create a box of supplies you might need to implement this vision.

Working Collaboratively/Speaking, Listening and Viewing

- In small groups of two or three students, create your own oral history. What are some questions you might ask? Try to remember significant occurrences in your life. Jot down a few ideas, then interview each other.