
BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF NCACGN/NCANRN MEMBERS

Brief Biographies of the 6 presidents of the organization

Presidents:

1923-1931 Carrie Early Broadfoot

1932-1934 Blanche Hayes Sansom

1934- 1941 Ruby Woodbury Scarlett Hilton

1942- 1944 Geneva Collins Hunt

1944- 1946 Flora Blanchette

1946- 1949 Elizabeth McMillan Thompson

Carrie Early Broadfoot – 1st President of the NCACGN and 2016 NC Nursing Hall of

Fame Inductee

Carrie Early Broadfoot was born on June 13, 1870 in Lynchburg, Virginia. Virtually nothing is known about her young life until she entered Frederick Douglass Memorial Hospital (FDMH) in Philadelphia, in the fall of 1896 graduating in its third class in 1899. After nine months of private duty nursing in Philadelphia she returned to FDMH as Head Nurse, a position she held for the next 5 years. In 1905, Broadfoot moved to Raleigh, NC where she served as Superintendent of Nurses at St. Agnes Hospital. St Agnes Hospital opened in 1896 and was the second hospital for African Americans in North Carolina (the first was Leonard Hospital which opened in 1885 on the campus of Shaw University in Raleigh). It was also the home to the first nursing program for African American women in the state. Broadfoot served for two years until her marriage to Thomas Broadfoot on June 30, 1908. He was a postal clerk on the railroads and lived in Fayetteville. After her marriage, she moved to Fayetteville and retired from active nursing practice until the first World War. When war was declared, Broadfoot joined the American Red Cross nursing service planning to go overseas to nurse the troops. Instead, she was directed to work at home to help control the influenza epidemic sweeping the country. Broadfoot worked as a private duty nurse in Fayetteville until 1923 when she took the dual positions of Nursing Supervisor of the Negro Division at the NC Sanatorium and Director of its new nursing school for African American women.

In addition to tending to her family and working full time, Broadfoot maintained involvement in the nursing profession. In 1921, she and four other North Carolina African American nurses attended a meeting of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses in Washington, DC. These five launched a state chapter of the organization. Broadfoot was the President for the first 8 years and remained active in the organization until she suffered a debilitating stroke in 1944. By that time, she was a widow and due to her stroke, she moved in with her sister in Roxbury, MA who cared for Broadfoot until her death in 1945.

Upon her retirement from the State Sanitarium, the Board of Directors passed the following resolution (from the June 1944 issue of the Sanatorium Sun, p.2)

"The Board of Directors of the North Carolina Sanatorium learns with deep regret of the sickness of Mrs. Carrie E. Broadfoot and desires to express their earnest wish for her speedy and complete recovery. For twenty years, Mrs. Broadfoot has been the Superintendent of Nurses of the Negro Division of the North Carolina Sanatorium and she has labored unceasingly and oftentimes at the expense of her health for the welfare of the institution. We were exceedingly fortunate in securing her services in the organization of the North Carolina Sanatorium Training School for Negro Nurses, the second Tuberculosis Training School in the United States. Her outstanding ability, splendid character and lofty ideals and her prestige as organizer of the Negro State Nurses Association of North Carolina in 1923 and as president for the first eight years and as recording secretary of the National Association of Negro Nurses have done much in establishing the Sanatorium and the Training School in the confidence of the Negroes over the State and in getting them to take advantage of the facilities offered for the treatment and prevention of tuberculosis. Be it resolved That the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Sanatorium express their appreciation for the outstanding services Mrs. Broadfoot has rendered the institution and the cause of tuberculosis in the state.

Carrie Earley Broadfoot passed away on January 8, 1945 in Roxbury and was buried in Fayetteville's Elmwood Cemetery alongside her husband. In 2016 she was inducted into the North Carolina Nurses Association Hall of Fame.

[The Philadelphia Inquirer Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 5-24-1899, p. 5](#)

[The New The New York Age New York, New York 11-24-1923 p. 3](#)

She is also mentioned in these newspaper articles:

[The New York Age 9-18-1920 p 2 ; 9-26-1931, p. 9; 9-4-1926, p. 3; 10-17-1931, p. 9](#)

[The Lenoir News Topic, Lenoir, NC 12-18-1924, p. 9](#)

[The News and Observer, Raleigh, North Carolina 4-2-1935, p. 10, 5-9-1930, p. 8;](#)

[The Charlotte News 10-6-1932, p. 19](#)

[The Pittsburgh Courier 5-3-1930, p. 14](#)

American Journal of Nursing Nursing News and Announcements. (1925). *The American Journal of Nursing*, 25(7), 602-628. Retrieved February 17, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3409272>

Blanche Catherine Hayes Sansom – 2nd President of the NCACGN 1932-1934

The Charlotte News 3-8-1934, p. 13

Blanche Catherine Hayes Sansom was born on February 28, 1890 in Maxton, NC to Frances and William P. Hayes, a Methodist Episcopal minister and member of the North Carolina General Assembly during Reconstruction. Her father drove a horse and buggy on his pastoral visits and often took Blanch with him. Through this, she became interested in helping the sick. She graduated from St. Agnes Hospital School of Nursing in 1910. Sansom began her nursing career as a private duty nurse in Maxton, living with her parents, but soon took a job on the Green River Plantation in Rutherfordton. There was not a doctor nearby so everyone on the plantation, both white and African American called on her for help when they were sick or injured. For four years she practiced a kind of public health nursing and health education in the area. In 1919 she went to Tarboro as a Red Cross nurse during the epidemic of Spanish flu that killed thousands in our state. In 1920 Sansom became the first African American school nurse in Charlotte. In 1928 Sansom took special training in public health, school nursing and nursing administration at Columbia University in New York City supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Health Circle. She worked for the health department until her retirement in 1958.

Sansom joined the NCACGN at the second meeting in 1924. She was elected VP of the organization at that meeting. She was very active in the Charlotte Chapter as well as the state-wide organization. She spoke at conventions in 1924, 1925, 1945 and 1948. In 1938, Sansom was named Relief Chairlady to see to the needs of the members of organization during the Great Depression. In 1941 she wrote letters on behalf of the organization to state public health officials seeking the equalization of salaries for African American and White public health nurses.

In addition to her work in the schools, at the health department and in the NCANRN, Mrs. Sansom was active and held offices in the Charlotte Red Cross Chapter and in the NC Tuberculosis Association. Below are many tributes and articles about her extraordinary life and pioneering career.

This tribute to Nurse Sansom is on page 38 of the December 1959 Tar Heel Nurse.

Throughout the state recently several nurses have received plaudits and recognition in various ways from their own communities where they live and work. Because accomplishments of an individual nurse reflect honor on the entire profession, we believe all NCSNA members will be interested in the recognition which has come to these nurses.

Mrs. Blanche Hayes Sansom recently retired after 39 years in public health nursing with the Charlotte Health Department and was the subject of a feature article in the *Charlotte Observer*. As senior nurse, Mrs. Sansom was supervisor of midwives and had charge of the birth control clinic. She was employed by the City of Charlotte in 1920 as its first full-time Negro school nurse.

On the day of her retirement, the City and County Health Departments paid tribute to her with a party, presents, and speeches. A former supervisor of public health nurses said of her: "While she climbed in status, she never lost contact with her people. She remained a true humanitarian."

Mrs. Sansom sent to members of NCSNA a special message of appreciation for the cards and letters sent to her on her retirement and these gems of wisdom gleamed from nearly 40 years of nursing: "Patients are people; learn to listen – don't talk too much; and don't know everything."

She is a graduate of St. Agnes Hospital School of Nursing, Raleigh, and had post-graduate work at Columbia University, North Carolina College, and the University of Michigan.

From: Coles, A.B. (1969). The Howard University School of Nursing in Historical Perspective. *Journal of the National Medical Association* 62(2), p. 105-118

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2611690/pdf/jnma00516-0005.pdf>

The St. Agnes Hospital Training School for Nurses was established in 1895. It was under the care of physicians and was registered in the State of North Carolina. Some of its outstanding graduates include Blanche Catherine Hayes who graduated from the school in 1910. In August of that year, she was called to Rutherfordton, North Carolina on Green River Plantation to nurse an old colored Mammy. Miss Hayes found work on Green River Plantation very interesting. She was the only person with medical knowledge within 11 miles. Public health nursing was almost unknown in North Carolina at that time, but Miss Hayes did much educational work among the tenants of the plantation. She was later called to nurse the daughter of one governor-elect of North Carolina. In 1919 she did Red Cross nursing in Tarboro, North Carolina. In 1920 she was appointed to the school system in North Carolina as the first colored school nurse. In 1928 she was given a scholarship to do special work at Columbia University by the National Health Circle for Colored People.

From the 7th annual report of the North Carolina Sanatorium, 1920

[1920 Annual report of the NC Tuberculosis Association](#)

\$225.00 was used under the colored public health nursing appropriation to pay the salary of Blanche Hayes, a colored registered nurse attached to the Health Department of Edgecombe County, immediately under the direction and instruction of Miss Clara Ross, Public Health Nurse for Edgecombe County, for a period of three months. This enabled the Health Department to provide visiting nursing service for the colored patients during the influenza epidemic of last year. Financing this work was of a temporary nature and was done to demonstrate the usefulness of colored public health nursing and aid the county until funds could be secured to continue the work. Blanche Hayes is now on the staff of the Charlotte Health Department.

From the book *Pathfinders* by Adah Thoms (1985):

St. Agnes is well represented in the work of one of its outstanding graduates - Blanche Catherine Hayes. Miss Hayes, R.N. was born in Lumberton, N.C. Her father, William P. Hayes was a Methodist Episcopal minister with a family of 11 children. He owned a horse and buggy and when he went to make his pastoral calls it was

always a great pleasure for Blanche to accompany him. It was during her childhood days while accompanying her father on his visits, especially to the sick, that she was inspired to become a nurse. In the fall of 1907 she entered St. Agnes Hospital, Raleigh, N.C. to begin her course in nursing. She was graduated from the school in 1910. She did private duty nursing a short while in her hometown, Maxton, N.C. In August 1910 she was called to Rutherfordton, N.C. on Green River Plantation to nurse an old colored Mammy who had nursed the Coxe family for forty years ... there was not a doctor within 11 miles and everyone on the Plantation, white or colored called the nurse for aid. Public health nursing was almost unknown in NC at that time but Miss Hayes did much educational work among the tenants of Green River Plantation. Four years were spent there ... After returning to her home for a week's rest she was called to nurse the daughter of Angus Wilton McLean who was then chairman of the Democratic Party of NC and later became governor of NC ... in 1919 she went to Tarboro NC to do Red Cross work. A generalized program was carried on there, touching the schools, city and county. The work was very hard in Tarboro as the people did not understand what a public health nurse meant to them and resented having her come into their homes ... Another piece of work attempted was the training of midwives ... In 1920 she accepted a position as school nurse in Charlotte, N.C. the first colored nurse ever employed by the school system, so the entire work had to be organized.

The Charlotte Observer, 9-9-1959, p. 23

Mrs. Sansom's letter to the Editor of the Charlotte Observer 10-3-1963 p. 54

President Sansom is also mentioned in these newspaper clippings:

The Charlotte News 8-27-1920, p. 3; 3-4-1943, p. 20; 5-2-1949, p. 2; 10-12-1951, p. 21; 1-28-1942, p. 19;

The Charlotte Observer 11-7-1923, p. 5 (with photo); 1-8-1925, p. 12; 4-9-1941, p. 8; 11-10-1938, p. 8; 11-6-1938, p. 16; 2-1-1944, p. 19; 11-15-1955, p. 30;

The Afro American 10-17-1931 p.18

American Journal of Nursing Nursing News and Announcements. (1925). *The American Journal of Nursing*, 25(7), 602-628. Retrieved February 17, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3409272>

Ruby A.F. Woodbury Scarlett Hilton 3rd President of the NCANRN 1934-1941

Ruby A. F. Woodbury Scarlett Hilton, R.N., had a long and distinguished career in nursing education and practice. She was born in July 1895 in Georgetown, South Carolina to Frank and Chloe Woodbury. An article in the *Pittsburgh Courier* (1972) reports she graduated from the Hospital and Training School in Charleston, South Carolina (now known as McClellan's Hospital). Woodbury founded and operated the first hospital in her hometown, Georgetown, South Carolina. Subsequently, she served as Director of Nurses at the Arthur B. Lee Hospital in Summerville, S.C., and according to the 1920 U.S. Census, by age 25, she was the Head Nurse at the Good Samaritan Hospital and Training School in Columbia, South Carolina. By 1928, Woodbury was the Superintendent at Blue Ridge Hospital and Training School in Asheville. In 1930, after Blue Ridge Hospital closed at the beginning of the Great Depression, she accepted the Superintendency at L. Richardson Hospital in Greensboro, North Carolina. Woodbury oversaw both the hospital and the nursing school there. She met and married a local Greensboro physician, Dr. Henry Clay Scarlett who tragically died in a car wreck in 1940. Mrs. Scarlett was instrumental in getting the hospital accredited, and in securing funds from the Rosenwald Foundation for the construction of a new Nurses Home for the nurses and student nurses working at the hospital (Elkins, 1969). Scarlett was very active in the state and national Associations of Colored Graduate Nurses, serving as the regional president for the area covering Greensboro, High Point, and Winston Salem, North Carolina from 1929 through 1937. She was elected President of the North Carolina State Association of Negro Registered Nurses in 1934 and served until she was widowed and left the state in 1941. Following her service at L. Richardson Hospital, she served as Director of Nurses at Prairie View College Hospital and Training School in Prairie View, Texas. Subsequently, she was named Dean of Women and School Nurse at Kittrell College in Kittrell, North Carolina. From there she moved to New York City and worked at the Kingsbridge Jewish Medical Center for over twenty years. After moving to New York City in the 1940s, she did academic work in methods of teaching in hospital administration and ward management at Harlem Hospital and New York University.

Woodbury-Scarlett joined the NCACGN in 1928 while she was in Asheville. By 1930 she was the President of the Greensboro chapter. In 1933 she served as the Vice President of the state wide organization was elected President the next year. Scarlett attended every convention between 1930 and 1938 and spoke at the conventions in 1930, 1935 and 1937.

While she was living in New York, she married Mr. Hilton. She was honored at a bi-racial banquet commemorating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the NCSNA in 1952. Her life's work showed consistent attention to advancing her skills, working to improve the health of her community and advancing the nursing profession.

The New York Age, NY, NY 11-8-1952 p. 18

American Journal of Nursing, July 1932

Geneva Sitrena Collins Hunt 4th President of the NCANRN 1942-1944 ygyu

The Future Outlook, Greensboro, NC 6-13-42, p.5

Geneva Collins Hunt was born on January 22, 1907 in Asheville. In 1929 she graduated from the St. Agnes Hospital School of Nursing and was Assistant

Superintendent there from 1929-1933. In 1934, she received a Rosenwald Scholarship to study hospital administration at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD. For thirteen years, from 1935 to 1948 she was Director of Nursing at L. Richardson Hospital in Greensboro, NC.

Hunt attended her first meeting of the NCACGN in 1930 and by 1934 was the Assistant Secretary of the Raleigh Chapter. In 1935 she gave a presentation at the Convention of "Hospital Duty". In 1942 she was elected President of the state organization and served for two years until she joined the Army Nurse Corps and moved to Washington, D.C. In 1944 she was elected President of the Southeastern Region of the national association.

In 1949 she became a 1st Lt in the US Army Nurse Corps at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C and later was in supervisory positions in Norfolk, Philadelphia and Welfare Island, NY.

From her Obituary:

Mrs. Hunt was the daughter of the late Will Greenlee and the late Mrs. Nellie Collins Harper. She was the widow of the late Rev. Jesse A. Hunt, former pastor of Grace Lutheran Church. She was a graduate of the 1925 class of Stephens-Lee High School. She graduated from Saint Agnes Hospital, Saint Augustine College in Raleigh. She received a Julius Rosenwald Scholarship to attend the University of Maryland School of Hospital Administration. She later interned at Providence and John Hopkins Hospitals in Baltimore. She attended the Nun Occasions Hospital Administrators School, University of Chicago. Her varied nursing career included supervisor of nurses for the Department of Hospitals for New York City; supervisor and nurse-in-charge of the Lucian Moss Home for the Chronically Ill; Albert Einstein Medical Center, northern division, Philadelphia; director of nurses, Norfolk Community Hospital, Norfolk, Va.; assistant superintendent at Saint Agnes Hospital, Raleigh; and superintendent and director of Nursing School at the L. Richardson Hospital, Greensboro. She joined the Army Nurses Corps and served her tour of duty as a first lieutenant at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C. She was licensed professionally in eight states, was a past president of the N.C. Black Nurses Association, past treasurer of the Tri-State Professional Nurses Association. She was listed as an outstanding and distinguished American in the 1971 edition of Community Leaders of America.

Flora Blanchette 5th President 1945-1946

The Future Outlook, Greensboro, NC 6-13-42, p.5

Flora Lenore Blanchette of Greensboro was elected President of the NCANRN in 1945. She was born on September 25, 1899 in Basseterre on the island of St. Kitts in the Caribbean to Charles Bernard and Ada Emmaline Blanchette. Shortly after immigrating to the United States in 1923 she moved to Greensboro, North Carolina to enroll in the L. Richardson Memorial Hospital (LRMH) nursing school. After graduating in 1926, she worked at the hospital as a registered nurse. In 1939 she became a nursing supervisor at LRMH and then was promoted to the position of educational director at the LRMH Nursing School in 1941.

After World War II, Governor William Hasties of the American Virgin Islands appointed Blanchette to the position of the Director of Nursing Education on the island of St. Croix. She began her new duties in January of 1948. By 1950 she had organized and been elected President of the NACGN Virgin Island Chapter

[The New York Age](#) Jan 10, 1948, p. 4

The minutes of the NCANRN first mention Blanchette in 1941 when she was listed as President of the Greensboro chapter. Only four years later, in 1945 she was elected President of the state wide organization. She stepped down in 1946 to assume her new duties in the American Virgin Islands.

This article in the American Journal of Nursing mentions her:

Nursing in the Virgin Islands. (1951). *The American Journal of Nursing*, 51(12), 705-706. doi:10.2307/3468051

Elizabeth McMillan Thompson 6th President of the NCANRN 1946-1949

From the book: Fayetteville, North Carolina By Fred Whitted published by Arcadia Press in 2000.

Mary Elizabeth McMillan Thompson was born on September 29, 1908, in Tarboro, North Carolina to Dr. A.S. and Viola Thompson. She attended Shaw University in Raleigh, and in 1929, graduated with a B.S. in nursing from Freedman's Hospital in Washington, D.C. Through her alumna association she was a long-time member of the American Nurse Association and the National League for Nursing Education. A year later, she obtained a public health nursing certificate from Howard University. In 1931 she began working for the Cumberland County Health Department and stayed there for thirty-eight years. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, she worked simultaneously at the Health Department and at Fayetteville State Normal School (now Fayetteville State University) as the college nurse. The university bartered room and board for nursing services. Thompson helped to organize the Midwife Institutes held at Fayetteville State University in the 1930s. She became president of the NCANRN in 1946 and served until the merge with the NCSNA in 1949. She married Luther Thompson in 1941 and adopted a daughter in 1959. She died on April 27, 1982.

Thompson or "Nurse Mac" as she was commonly known, joined the NCANRN in 1933, and by 1945 she was President of District 9 local chapter. A year later she was elected President of the state wide organization. Her pivotal three- year term ended with the merger with the formerly all- white NCSNA.

An oral history interview with Elizabeth McMillan Thompson can be found at: <https://archive.org/details/ElizabethMcMillanThompson>

She was named Woman of the Year in Cumberland County, NC in 1956. An article about this event was published in The Carolinian, Raleigh, NC 3-10-1956, p. 1