

## Rosabelle Jacobus (1870-1951)

Rosabelle Jacobus came to Worcester in 1906 from New York to assume the position of superintendent of nurses for the Worcester Society for District Nursing, the forerunner of today's Visiting Nurses Association. She held that position for 37 years before retiring in 1943.

She played a prominent role in the influenza crisis of 1918-19. Below her obituary notice is an article from the *Evening Gazette* showing her outspoken and forceful role in the controversy surrounding an upcoming decision by the Board of Health about lifting the ban on public gatherings in schools, churches, theatres, and the like.

A study of the influenza pandemic in the United States by the University of Michigan Center for the History of Medicine and Michigan Publishing found ten articles in which she was mentioned ([here](#)).

**FAM, Tuesday, Nov. 13, 1951**

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# BITUARIES

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**PASSES**

**Miss Rosabelle Jacobus, 81, of 14 Bowdoin street, former director of the Worcester Society for District Nursing, who died yesterday.**

**MRS. ELIZA M. DUQUETTE**

Mrs. Eliza M. Duquette, 82, of 39 Birch street, died yesterday at her home after a long illness. She was the widow of Francois X. Duquette.

Mrs. Duquette had been a resident of Worcester for 70 years. She was a member of the Ladies of Ste. Anne Sodality of Holy Name of Jesus Church.

She leaves a son, Romeo J. Duquette of Worcester; three daughters, Miss Leah M. Duquette of Worcester, Blanche, known in religion as Sister M. Immaculata with the Sisters of Ste. Anne stationed in Lynn, and Irene L., wife of Leon F. Lamarche of Worcester; two grand-

### Miss Jacobus Dies, Former Director Of Nursing Society

Miss Rosabelle Jacobus, 81, of 14 Bowdoin street, former director of the Worcester Society for District Nursing, died yesterday in The Memorial Hospital.

She was associated with public nursing for many years and with the nursing society as executive secretary for 37 years, retiring in February, 1943.

In May, 1942, she was awarded the honorary degree of Master of Civic Service by Clark University. In part it read: "As superintendent of this society, Miss Jacobus has helped it grow into an organization with a staff of 50 workers, and a yearly budget in excess of \$100,000. The healing care of this society, directed by Miss Jacobus, has brought health and hope to thousands of burdened families of Worcester."

#### Born in Jersey City

Miss Jacobus was born in Jersey City Heights, formerly Old Bergen, N. J., daughter of the late John Otis and Rosene (Nublette) Jacobus. She attended the public schools of Bergen, including the Bergen School for Girls at Jersey City Heights, and was graduated from the Jersey City High School.

Following her graduation from the high school she went into nursing. She attended the training school connected with the New York Post Graduate Hospital, and was graduated from the institution in 1892.

**Rosabelle Jacobus**

*Telegram, Nov-13-1951*

Following graduation she was employed at the Church of Sea and Land in New York's Lower East Side, and later became connected with the Henry Street Settlement in New York City where she remained 12 years.

She came here in 1906 with Worcester South District Nursing Society.

She leaves a nephew, F. H. Brownell Jr. of Chatham, N. J., and two nieces, Mrs. George Smith of Upper Montclair, N. J., and Mrs. Donald Turnball of Chatham.

#### Memberships

Miss Jacobus was a member of the New York Post Graduate Alumnae, New York State Nurses Association, American Nurses Association, League for Nursing Education, American Red Cross, Massachusetts State Nursing Association, Worcester County Nurses Association, Henry Street Settlement Alumni Association, New York, National Organization for Public Health Nursing, and Massachusetts Organization for Public Health Nursing.

Also, Worcester Quota Club and Monday Evening Club for Social Workers. She was a former member of Worcester Woman's Club and Worcester Business Woman's Club.

Funeral services will be held at 3.30 p. m. Wednesday at Sessions Chapel, 71 Pleasant street. Rev. Stuart Haskins of Chestnut Street Congregational Church will officiate. Burial will be in Montclair. There are no visiting hours.

Worcester Telegram, Oct-18-1918

## RIDICULOUS TO REOPEN PUBLIC PLACES, SAYS NURSE JACOBUS

**With Nurses, Doctors, Canteen Workers and Other Helpers Worn Out, She Asks Who Will Attend Sick in a Recrudescence**

"It is absolutely ridiculous to think of yet lifting the ban on the closing of public places," said Miss Rosabelle Jacobus, supervisor of Worcester society for district nursing, who with her capable staff of nurses has been working night and day to relieve the sick and suffering affected by the epidemic.

"Things are clearing up, but it has not yet cleared off; things are better, but it is not over," said Miss Jacobus in speaking of conditions at the present time. "If schools, churches, theaters and other public places reopen Monday, it may mean another outbreak of influenza."

Things are now being handled quite well, but with nurses, doctors, canteen workers and all who have come to the call in this emergency, worn out, it might be impossible to handle another such trying situation. On the staff of district nurses four nurses are ill, and things are about all they can handle. Miss Jacobus thinks that as long as the step for the safety of the public was taken and things have been closed for the past two weeks, it should continue until the climax has passed and until the city is out of danger. With schools and movies opening people would flock to them, many of them convalescing, and would expose hundreds to this disease, that has taken so many. School children would come from homes where there is sickness, and the city is exposed to great danger, and another more terrible outbreak than the first if the ban is not kept on until this critical period is entirely passed. "Every-

one is worn out," said Miss Jacobus yesterday, "and people are exhausted, and who would care for others who would be stricken? I have been in houses where six and seven are ill in one room, with no one to give them a drink, no one to help them. This sickness has struck almost every home, one, two and three in a single family being ill, and in many families it has been fatal to more than one member. Deaths are still occurring, and we are yet in great danger," says Miss Jacobus. There are now about 25 workers on the staff, and while all are not graduated nurses these workers have been of great help.

Even with the danger passing, there are from 20 to 30 new cases each day, and with the old cases it is about all the society can handle. Generous donations have greatly helped conditions. There is still great need of alcohol, and will be. While some donations have been generous in this line, more will be needed. This has been a great drain on the treasury of the society, for treatment has been expensive, and there was so large a call for remedies. The treasury will need generous and many donations to continue work thru the winter.

The society will begin, as soon as the danger is passed, follow up work. They will see that their patients continue to abide by rules set down by the nurses, and as many cases that needed attention previous to this, have come to their attention these will be kept in mind and all will be recorded. Miss Jacobus, speaking of the past few weeks, says she never remembers anything worse than conditions in the city.

The lifting of the ban was postponed as a result of the outcry, but only for a few days. Further evidence of the gradual easing of the problem led the Board to take that step some four days later.