

## **Nora Rice Miller, Physician**

### **Her Legacy: Pioneering in the study of medicine as a working mother**

Nora Rice came to Fort Collins in 1888. Born in Illinois in 1867, she came west to teach, which is what she did. She taught at Franklin School until marrying Dr. Charles Miller, the county coroner and practicing physician in the Fort Collins area. When her husband died in 1902, leaving her with two young children to care for, she decided to become a doctor herself and gained admission to the University of Michigan Medical School, an unusual accomplishment for a woman at that time. The Michigan university was one of only three medical schools in the country that admitted women at that time.

After studying there for two years, she transferred to the University of Colorado School of Medicine, from which she received her medical degree. She opened her practice in Fort Collins as one of the first female physicians in town. Most of her patients were women, as the male population tended to distrust female doctors, and she was always on call, sometimes leaving her warm home on a cold winter's night to tend to a patient on a far flung ranch or farm. She traveled on horseback, medical bag at her side.

Later, she relocated to Baca County, where she was the only physician, male or female. After practicing there for a number of years, she returned to the classroom in the 1930s and continued to teach during World War II. She died in 1959

According to her daughter, Mary Rice Wigle, she was "an awesome, gutsy lady."

Written by Barbara Fleming, Author, Coloradoan Columnist and Living Her Legacy Wordsmith