

# White, Julia Ann

## (1870–1957)

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Julia Ann White was an Adventist physician and educator. She was the first female physician at Loma Linda Sanitarium who developed the initial nursing training programs at both the Loma Linda and Glendale Sanitariums.

## Early Years

Julia Ann White was born June 23, 1870, in Sparta, Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup> Her parents, Robert James (1846-1914) and Ann Jane (Slater) (1852-1931) White, were immigrants from England.<sup>2</sup>

White graduated with her medical degree from Dr. John Harvey Kellogg's American Medical Missionary College in Chicago, Illinois, in 1900.<sup>3</sup> After her graduation she connected with The Chicago Medical Mission.<sup>4</sup> She was responsible for teaching physiology and hygiene and the maternity work at 1926 Wabash Avenue.<sup>5</sup> In late 1901 she took some time off to visit her family in Skippers, Virginia.<sup>6</sup> By 1904 she was listed as part of the American Medical Missionary College faculty.<sup>7</sup> For a time she also practiced medicine at Battle Creek Sanitarium.

## Years in California

In early 1905 White was taking care of her aging and ailing parents at her home in Kalamazoo.<sup>8</sup> That same year, after the purchase of Loma Linda Sanitarium, Ellen White invited her to be one of the founding physicians of the new health institution.<sup>9</sup> She moved there in November 1905. She became the first female physician at the new



Julia Ann White

Photo courtesy of Loma Linda University Library Digital Archives.

institution where she practiced obstetrics and gynecology.<sup>10</sup> When she arrived, there was no one to pick her up at the train depot, so she walked, including the 125 steps up the hill to the sanitarium. "They told us that was where we got the 'climb-ate' in California, and we believed it by the time we got to the top."<sup>11</sup> She also taught at the newly formed Loma Linda College of Evangelists (soon renamed the College of Medical Evangelists in 1909). She founded the School of Nursing in 1906. From 1906 to 1916 she was listed as a member of the Loma Linda Sanitarium board of trustees (in later years she was listed as an "honorary" board member).<sup>12</sup>

White also participated in a "Medical Missionary Council" held October 27-31, 1907.<sup>13</sup> She presented on "The Object of Our Sanitarium Training Schools."<sup>14</sup> In this paper she argued that missionaries with medical training are far more effective in sharing the gospel, especially in overseas missions.<sup>15</sup> In 1908 she happily reported about graduation and the students leaving for mission appointments.<sup>16</sup> Later that year she was part of the publishing committee for a new periodical, published by the school at Loma Linda, helping to encourage medical missionary work.<sup>17</sup>

White was part of an initiative with the students at the College of Medical Evangelists to incorporate "real field missionary work" as part of the curriculum. She reported on an experiment in which they took students to Pasadena for three weeks going from house to house. She observed how upon their return they did "better class work" and thereby through this "preparatory training" were better prepared for service. They distributed copies of Adventist publications such as the periodical *Life & Health* and Ellen White's book, *Ministry of Healing*. They found "that the Lord blessed us and made us a blessing. Our own souls were watered."<sup>18</sup>

In 1910, Dr. White was a signatory on the Articles of Incorporation for the newly formed College of Medical Evangelists and the Loma Linda Sanitarium that were merged into a single corporation. Once again, Dr. White was elected to a 21-member board of trustees for the new and unified corporate entity.<sup>19</sup> A well-respected medical doctor, she was one of the eight founding physicians of the original College of Medical Evangelists (today Loma Linda University).<sup>20</sup> She taught classes in medicine, obstetrics, and gynecology. During the next school year (1911-1912), she announced the opening of a "Nurses' Training School" as part of the college. Students needed ten grades of preliminary education to be accepted. The course opened September 4, 1911.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, the need for a "post-graduate course for nurses" meant that the faculty expanded the program to include more advanced training. This additional track opened October 2, 1911 (this first term extended through June 26, 1912).<sup>22</sup>

Dr. White was known as an eloquent speaker at churches and camp meetings.<sup>23</sup> For example, in 1908, she gave a public talk about vegetarianism to the "Woman's Club" of San Bernardino.<sup>24</sup> In 1913, she gave the commencement address at the College of Medical Evangelists.<sup>25</sup> A strong and independent woman herself, White predicted that through "proper attention to dress, diet and exercise, American girls will . . . become physically as strong as boys."<sup>26</sup>

After Ellen White's death (1915), it became apparent by church leaders that a new hospital needed to be built to provide clinical training for nurses and doctors in southern California. A group of women, who became known as the "woman's movement," collaborated to raise funds to provide this training that was essential so that the College of Medical Evangelists could achieve proper accreditation. Dr. White served as the secretary to this group of women, working closely with Josephine Gotizan, to raise funds. They felt that this would be an appropriate way to honor their friend, Ellen White, who worked so diligently to help get these sanitariums in southern California started during her lifetime, and therefore referred to as "memorial hospital work" on behalf of the Southern California Conference.<sup>27</sup> This work ultimately resulted in the creation of White Memorial Hospital, which continues to the present day as a major medical facility in Los Angeles, California.

In 1917 she also accepted a position on the medical staff of the Glendale Sanitarium.<sup>28</sup> White participated with other Adventist physicians in conducting health education programs during the deadly 1918-1919 influenza pandemic.<sup>29</sup> She also treated the famous actress, Pauline Starke (1901-1977), making headline news across the country.<sup>30</sup>

Dr. White expressed her most detailed published philosophy of health in a talk about training nurses in 1915. In this talk, she upheld the Adventist ideal of a holistic philosophy of health that embraced "head, hand, and heart."<sup>31</sup> She worried about the "spirit of commercialism" that has "invaded the sick room, and is crushing out the nobler spirit of unselfish service to the sick."<sup>32</sup> The high standard of training must be matched, she believed, by an equally important sense of mission. She reminded fellow church members of Ellen White's counsels about the importance of medical missionary evangelism.<sup>33</sup>

## Declining Years

In her later years, Dr. White partnered with the La Crescenta Seventh-day Adventist Church to create the La Crescenta Clinic to provide underserved individuals with medical care. She died June 16, 1957, at Azusa, California.<sup>34</sup>

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### SOURCES

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## NOTES

1. Obituary, *ARH*, August 29, 1957, 26.
2. <http://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tools/tree/187501081/invitees/accept?inviteId=f8b52464-95ff-41e4-a55f-6dbcd191d6c8> [accessed 1/16/23] See also Obituary, *The San Bernardino County Sun*, December 29, 1914, 5.
3. Obituary, *ARH*, August 29, 1957, 26.
4. "News and Notes," *The Life Boat*, August 1900, 147.
5. See *The Life Boat*, February 1901, 297, 298.
6. "Interesting Brevities," *The Life Boat*, October 1901, 155.
7. *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventists: The Official Denominational Directories for 1904* (Washington, D.C.: The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1904), 80.
8. See note in *The West Michigan Herald*, July 12, 1905, 3.
9. A "communication" notes how she was located at Loma Linda Sanitarium in Southern California. See *ARH*, December 14, 1905, 18; Obituary, *Pacific Union Recorder*, July 15, 1957, 13.
10. See announcement of her move in *The West Michigan Herald*, October 4, 1905, 4.

11. Quoted in "Centennial Moments" column courtesy of the Loma Linda University Heritage Room.
12. "Southern California Conference Proceedings," *ARH*, November 14, 1907, 17.
13. W. A. R[uble], "Medical Missionary Council," *ARH*, November 21, 1907, 22.
14. "The Council of the Medical Department of the Pacific Union Conference," *Pacific Union Recorder*, November 14, 1907, 3. Her authorship is identified *Pacific Union Recorder*, November 28, 1907, 6.
15. See R. S. Cummings, "Report of the Medical Missionary Convention Held at Loma Linda, Cal., Oct. 28-31, 1907," *Life & Health*, March 1908, 124-125.
16. Julia A. White, "California," *Life & Health*, September 1908, 421.
17. See announcement in *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, January 13, 1909, 8.
18. Julia A. White, "Items from Loma Linda," *Pacific Union Recorder*, December 16, 1909, 4, 5.
19. Geo. A. Irwin, "An Important Council," *ARH*, June 9, 1910, 16.
20. W. C. White, "About the Work in California," *Pacific Union Recorder*, September 15, 1910, 2.
21. "Nurses' Training Course at Loma Linda, Calif.," *Central Union Outlook*, June 13, 1911, 6.
22. Julia A. White, "Loma Linda Post-Graduate Course for Nurses," *Central Union Outlook*, September 5, 1911, 8.
23. Cf. the request that she speak at the Northern California camp meeting: *Pacific Union Recorder*, April 29, 1915, 4.
24. "Social," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, March 25, 1908, 6; "Clubs," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, March 26, 1908, 8.
25. "A Large Class from Loma Linda," *The San Bernardino County Sun*, June 26, 1913, 7.
26. "News of Michigan Sifted," *The Herald-Palladium*, March 17, 1905, 7.
27. "Items of Interest," *Pacific Union Recorder*, May 4, 1916, 4.
28. See announcement: *Pacific Union Recorder*, January 11, 1917, 6.
29. Edna L. Reaser, "Medical Week at Oceanpark," *Pacific Union Recorder*, November 13, 1919, 4. See also description of her treatment for "influenza and fevers" featured in the article: "Adventist Speakers Flays Bolshevism," *The Los Angeles Times*, August 25, 1919, 21.

30. "Pauline Starke, Actress, Is Sick," *The Gazette*, January 31, 1931, 10.

31. Julia A. White, "A Study of the Pattern for Our Medical Missionary Work in Reference to the Training of Nurses," *ARH*, June 24, 1915, 19.

32. *Ibid.*, 20.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Obituary, *ARH*, August 29, 1957, 26.

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