

ESTHER TINSLEY—HELP FOR THE HURTING

WHEN?

1910-1974

EVENT

Esther Tinsley nationally recognized hospital administrator, mentor of nurses



WHERE?

Pittston, Pennsylvania

VOCABULARY

supervisor
administrator

Those who worked for her knew she was the best. If you really wanted to learn, you would be subject to her close adherence to high standards, ideals of commitment, and strict rules. Esther Tinsley was regarded during her lifetime and certainly afterward as a highly respected nurse, hospital administrator, and mentor. The nurses educated at the Pittston Hospital School of Nursing knew they would have no trouble obtaining a position anywhere once they had been trained under Tinsley.

At a time when many young women did not go to college, Tinsley earned her Registered Nursing degree in 1910 from the University of Pennsylvania. After serving as supervisor of the operating room after graduation for a year, she returned to the valley help establish the Nesbitt Hospital and its School of Nursing in Kingston, PA (Kashatus 45). A hands-on administrator Tinsley took the position of Superintendent of Nursing at Pittston Hospital in 1913. Though only 32 beds when it opened in 1893, under Tinsley the hospital opened new facilities in the mid 1920s and expanded to five stories with 110 full-time and 90 part-time employed (Kashatus 46).

The nursing school soon became nationally known as the one of the best training facilities anywhere utilizing modern equipment, up-to-date methods, and a very high level of care.

Tinsley seemed to be everywhere in the hospital. She had her own table in the lunch room where she observed the decorum of the nurses; she carefully monitored the farm animals kept on the hospital grounds and would milk the dozen cows, collect the eggs from the chickens, and feed the pigs as needed if the caretaker was ill (Kashatus 45). She watched her nurses learn how to make beds, take stock of supplies, prepare for surgeries, tutored them on every aspect of caring for the patient. She modeled patience when caring for the sick and steered her nurses through the careful monitoring of diagnosis, treatment, and recovery plans. She was involved in every aspect of the hospital.



She retired in 1974 at the age of 88 and died within days of the closing of the hospital in 1981. New federal regulations would prove to be too much for the hospital board to upgrade the facility so the decision was made to merge with Nanticoke and Wyoming Valley health care groups (Kashatus 46).

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Hospital Memories](#)

PRINT RESOURCES

Kashatus, William. *Valley With A Heart*. Luzerne County, PA: Luzerne County Historical Society and Luzerne Community College. 2012.

OTHER RESOURCES

HAVEN ON THE HILL DVD

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Interview someone in the health system and ask how care has changed since they first entered their career.
2. Esther Tinsley served through 6 decades. Choose five innovations that occurred between 1920 and 1970 that you think had the biggest change in health care.