



A Cultural History of the Nurse's Uniform

Christina Bates

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This first and only in-depth analysis of the attire worn by the largest workforce in the health care system explores the role of the nurse's uniform in creating nursing identity for over a hundred years.

The introduction of the nurse's uniform in the late nineteenth century was part of a strategy to legitimize North America's first nursing schools. At first varied and experimental in design, by the early 20th century the uniform was drawing on elements of fashionable, scientific, military and ecclesiastical wear, and had standardized into a blue or pink dress worn with stiffly starched white cap, bib, and apron. This remarkable outfit lasted until the 1970s, when educational and societal changes brought about its demise, and practical scrubs became the most common nursing apparel. Seen through the lens of age, gender, class and race, this book shows how the uniform was an active participant in the changing culture of nursing work and thought.

Richly illustrated with images of actual garments and over 150 compelling period photographs, cartoons and drawings, the book explore the uniform within the contexts of hospital, community, nursing school, and residence. *A Cultural History of the Nurse's Uniform* will appeal to nurses, historians and scholars of dress.

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