

Dr. Adelaide Woodard

In India, cultural and religious strictures prevented most women in the early twentieth century from seeking medical care from male doctors. To address this need, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. appointed a number of women doctors to the field.

Adelaide Woodard (1874-1945) did not apply for foreign mission work until the age of 40, but despite concerns about her age, the PCUSA accepted her application and assigned her to Fatehgarh in a densely-populated area served by the North India Mission.

When Dr. Woodard arrived in 1915, there was only a small dispensary and one trained nurse. In just five years, she oversaw the construction of Memorial Hospital and the start of formal nurses training.

The work was not easy. "Prices are so high and funds so low that this year has been very difficult. We have used every native plant and drug that we could, torn up our old clothes for dressings and used things that at home would be impossible," Dr. Woodward reported in 1918. "We are sadly in need of equipment."

By 1925, Dr. Woodard had secured funding from the First Presbyterian Church of Seattle for iron beds, operating room furniture, electric lights, an x-ray machine, and running water.

Like most missionary doctors, Dr. Woodard also traveled into outlying areas to provide medical services and Christian outreach. "We carry boxes and bags packed with medicines and dressings, some basins, an instrument and many disinfectants, a Bible, a hymn book and a roll of bright-colored pictures. These are our weapons with which to fight disease, dirt, ignorance, superstition and sin."

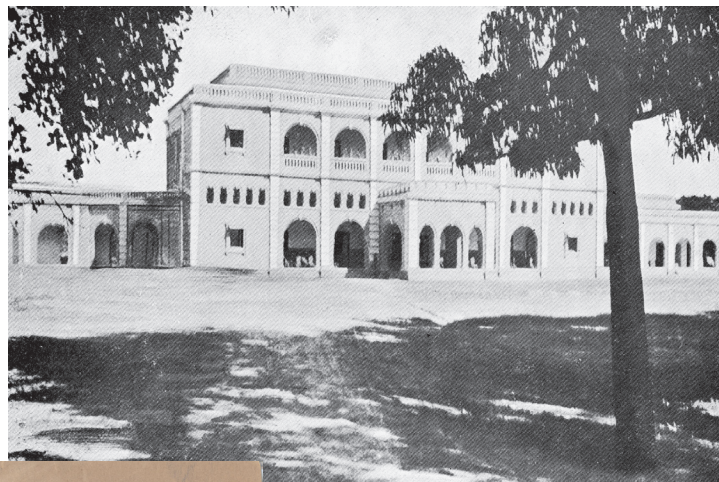
After a decade of service in India, Dr. Woodard was often called the "Bari Doctor Miss Sahiba," the great lady doctor.



The Presbyterian Historical Society provides resources for Heritage Sunday, a day set aside by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to celebrate and learn more about the rich history of Presbyterianism in America. Presbyterian Heritage Sunday materials are provided copyright-free by the Presbyterian Historical Society for the churches of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Additional resources for Heritage Sunday are available on our website at: www.history.pcusa.org

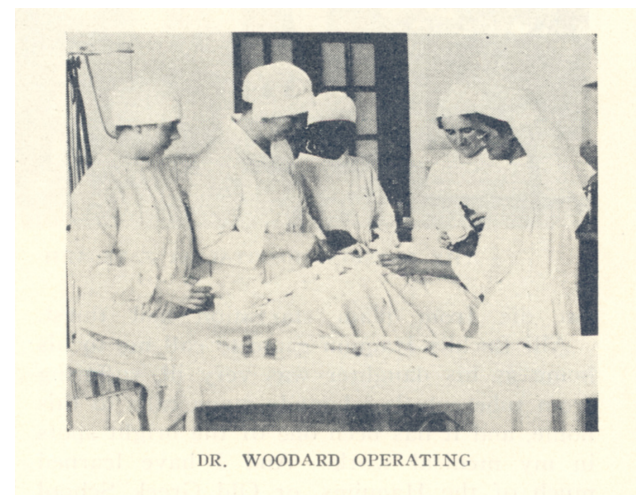
Presbyterian Heritage Sunday Medical Mission Work in India



Memorial Hospital, Fatehgarh, India



Dr. Adelaide Woodard



DR. WOODARD OPERATING