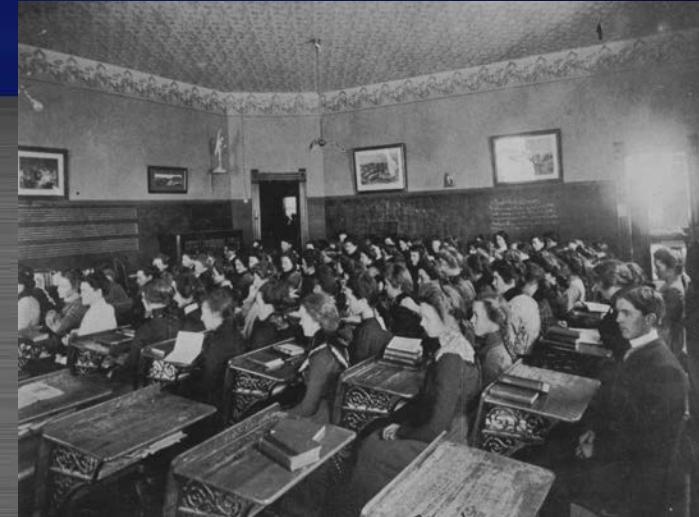
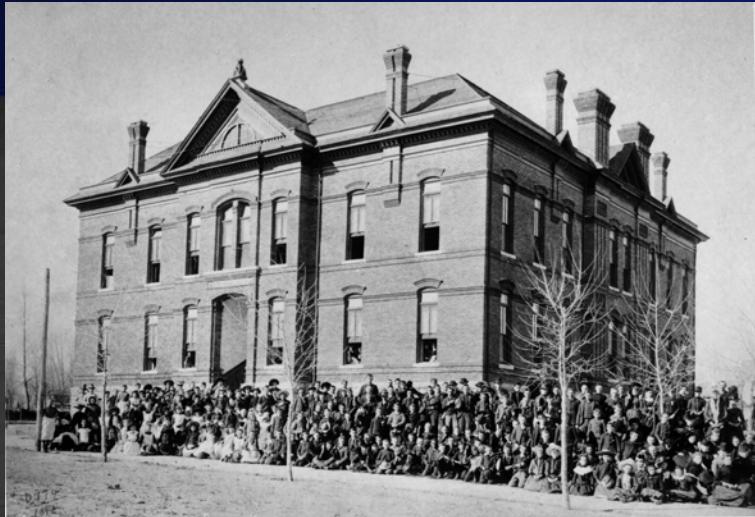


Dr. Nora Rice Miller (1868-1959)



Leonore (Nora) Rice Miller came to Fort Collins in 1893, and taught 6th and 7th grade at the Old Franklin School. Below are two early 20th century shots of Franklin School. Nora would marry physician Dr. Charles Perry Miller in 1894.

Sadly, Nora's husband died in 1902, leaving her with two small daughters to support. Nora attended Michigan Medical School for 2 years, and finished out her medical degree at the University of Colorado Medical School after a brief hiatus. She started her Fort Collins practice in 1908.



We wondered how a woman of that time – 1902, just widowed, a mother of two, not yet 35 – could pull it together to go to medical school. So we read through the oral history we have of Nora's daughter Mary Jane Wigle, who had this to say about her mom:

“She was a little woman, she was only five-feet-one. But she used to laugh and say her hillbilly Kentucky father had passed on his determination to her. **My mother was a person who never came unraveled** ... [but when my father died] She didn't know what to do. ...

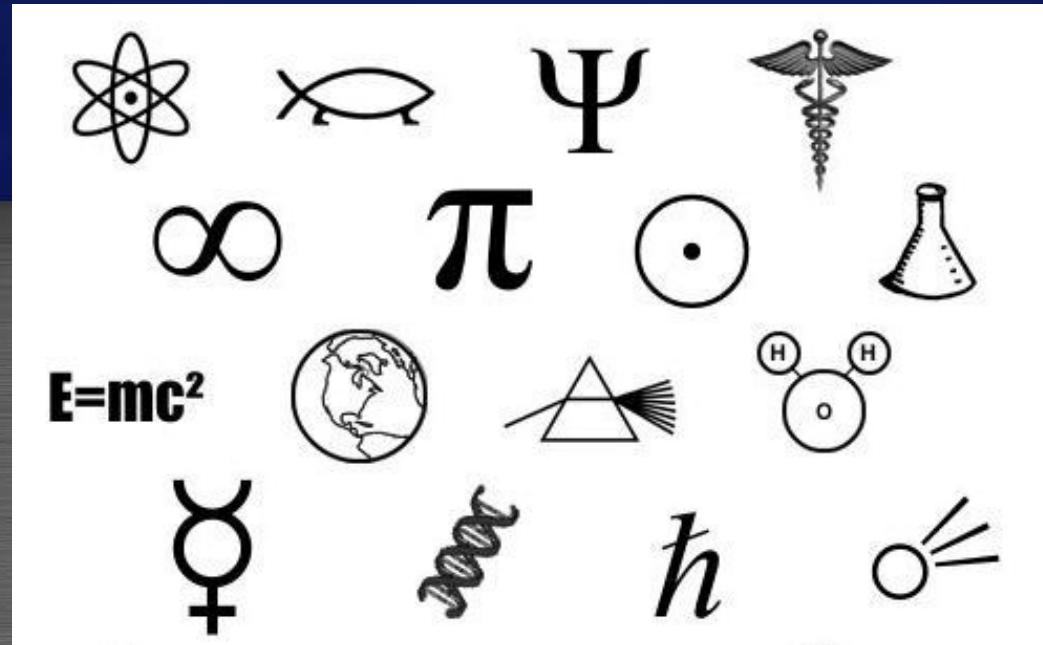
Dr. Kickland [a doctor & surgeon in Fort Collins] told Mom, ‘Now you get yourself interested in something. What would you like to do? ... **Why don't you study medicine?** You've helped him all this time.’ ... My mother said ‘Well, I've had it in my mind, but ... it's such a strange thing for a woman to do.’ And he said, “**Go on anyway. Why be bothered about what people think?**” So, we picked up in the fall of that year and went to Ann Arbor.”

At that time, automobiles had not come into use so Dr. Miller often traveled long distances by horse-drawn buggy to reach her patients. Much of her practice consisted of maternity cases, at a time when most babies were born at home rather than in a hospital. The horse-and-buggy picture below is not of her, but of that time, and the same goes with the baby picture, but the picture in the middle is Dr. Miller at her practice.



Dr. Miller moved her practice to Baca County (in southern Colorado) and saw quite a bit more business there than in Fort Collins – likely because she was the only physician in Baca County at the time. In the 1930s she moved to Texas. The shortage of school teachers during World War II called her back to her earlier profession, and 1942 found her teaching physics, math and engineering at a high school in Montana.

She retired from teaching in 1949; died in 1959; and is buried in Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins, Colorado.



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