

## Recent donation: Harriette A. Howe

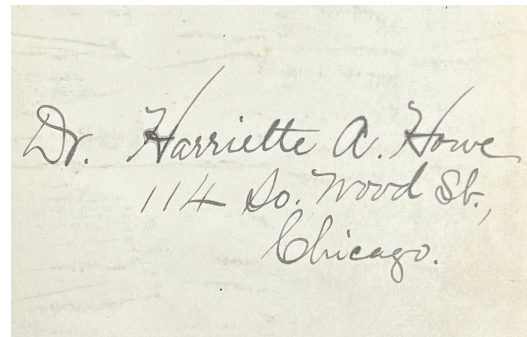
### Harriette A. Howe, MD, 1850-1926

By Emma Florio, Archives & Research Specialist

This past October, Galter received a donation from Kathryn Follett Bussman: an 1897 copy of *The Diseases of Infancy and Childhood* by L. Emmett Holt, which had been initially purchased by Harriette A. Howe, a graduate of Northwestern's Women's Medical College. This post explores Howe's life and career, giving life to the signature inside the book.

Harriette Amanda Howe was born on October 31, 1850, in Enfield, a small town in western Massachusetts. Her father, John Howe, worked as a farmer in the town. As a young woman, Howe was sent to Ipswich Female Seminary, in the eastern part of the state, which had been established in the 1820s to prepare young women for careers as teachers. After graduation in 1875, Howe worked as a teacher in Vermont and New York for two years.

In 1877, Howe began seven years of missionary work in South Africa, taking part in an explosion of American foreign missionary work that occurred in the late 1800s. She spent her seven years there teaching at girls' schools near Cape Town. Howe returned to the United States in 1884 to study medicine as an aid to her missionary work, with the ultimate goal of traveling to China as a medical missionary. In 1885, she enrolled at the Woman's Medical College of Chicago—which would become affiliated with Northwestern in 1892, retroactively making all of its graduates Northwestern alumnae.



Howe's inscription in *The Diseases of Infancy and Childhood*, written ca. March 1897.



View of the Chicago Foundlings' Home, 114 S. Wood Street, via <https://www.chicagofoundlingshome.org/>

While at the Woman's Medical School, Howe began working at the Chicago Foundlings' Home, an orphanage located on the city's near West Side. After earning her MD in 1888, Howe continued to work at the Foundlings' Home, forgoing her plan to travel to China. Later in life, she reflected that at the Foundlings' Home, she found "a work that satisfies her desire to benefit and befriend the helpless." She acted as the resident physician there for the next 20 years. During this time, in 1897, she purchased the book that is now held by Galter Special Collections, *The Diseases of Infancy and Childhood*, in downtown Chicago. She also attended the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Chicago for postgraduate work in 1905.

Sometime after 1910, Howe moved to Monterey, California. She continued her work as a physician there, specializing in the diseases of women and children. Later in life she returned to Massachusetts and died in Northampton, near her hometown of Enfield, on July 28, 1926.

## Selected References

"[Harriette Amanda Howe](#)," *The Biographical Encyclopedia of the United States*. Chicago: American Biographical Publishing Co., 1901.

Howe, Harriette A. [Northwestern University survey of Woman's Medical School Alumnae: Class of 1888](#), 1914, Northwestern University Woman's Medical School records. Drexel University Libraries. Philadelphia, PA.

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