

As Long as Life: The Memoirs of a Frontier Woman Physician, Mary Canaga Rowland, 1873–1966, edited by F. A. Loomis. Seattle, WA: Storm Peak Press, 1994. xi, 178 pp. Illustrations, maps, chronology, glossary of medical terms, index of medical terms. \$11.95 paper.

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Using a series of autobiographical vignettes by Dr. Mary Canaga Rowland, *As Long as Life* details her experiences as a child, student, teacher, wife/widow, mother, and doctor on the frontier. The editor, Rowland's great-great nephew, has interspersed court records, family character sketches, and his own commentary to make the work more coherent. Beginning in 1870s Nebraska, where Mary spent her childhood and youth, the story wends its way westward through Kansas, Idaho, and Oregon with brief sojourns in Iowa, New York, and Ohio. Fascinating characters inhabit the pages of the memoir. There is Arthur (an adolescent con man), Julia Megginson (an elderly Siletz Indian), and the family pets, Prince (the temperamental stallion), Buster (a mixed Collie and St. Bernard), and Chicky Boy (the canary whose story fills the last chapter of the book).

Like most memoirs, this one is selective—the editor describes Rowland's failed second marriage, a story the author omitted from the original. The narrative focuses on extraordinary events: the murder of Mary's husband, J. Walter Rowland, a flu epidemic at Chemawa Indian School, odd medical cases. Rowland intends to recount the exotic; in discussing a case of incest she informs her audience, "Another family in town may be worth mentioning because they were *very unusual*" (106, emphasis mine). But her tales also reveal the life of a non-elite physician and woman who lived through the taking of the West and the rise of scientific medicine. We glimpse the chain nature of expansion through frequent references to acquaintances who had, like the Canaga family, followed the frontier. We learn about the evolution of ordinary medical practice and what made the practices of women physicians distinct from those of their male counterparts, particularly in cases of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and incest. And she describes for us the trials of an ambitious career woman raising a child alone. Overall the book is an entertaining evening's reading, especially if taken with a large dose of the salts Rowland might have prescribed.

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