



Ten of the many remarkable women who made us who we are today...

Louisa Hart

Louisa Hart was a Canadian missionary who came to India in the late 1800s. For her medical services in South India during the time of the Bubonic plague, she was awarded the Kaiser-e-Hind, the highest national civilian award of the time.

Hart worked in Ranipet along with John Scudder and carried out various administrative responsibilities at the Ranipet hospital, including that of Medical Superintendent for two years.



Louisa Hart was the person who first suggested to her mission board that a hospital for women be set up in Vellore and that Ida Scudder raise funds for the project, before her return from America following her medical training.

Gertrude Dodd



Gertrude Dodd, an American heiress, was one of Ida Scudder's most ardent admirers and a loyal supporter throughout her life. Inspired by a fundraising campaign by Ida, Dodd left a life of luxury to come to India.

She served as an able administrator and treasurer of the institution for many decades in its early years. Dodd gave much of her personal inheritance for the cause of CMC, and was a significant contributor towards the funds collected to set up the medical school, the Union Mission Medical School.

Annie Hancock

Annie Hancock, Ida Scudder's classmate at Northfield Seminary, sailed to India with her when Ida returned to start working as a doctor, after graduating from Cornell.

Though she came as an evangelist, Hancock was also social worker and reformer, working tirelessly among the women confined to the zenanas of Vellore. She set up a Women's Social Service Centre, where she taught women to read, sew and play games, as well educated them about various aspects of health and child-care.



Before her death, Hancock, one of Ida's closet friends, had also become a beloved friend to the women of Vellore.

Mary Verghese



Padmashri Mary Puthisseril Verghese was a paraplegic hand surgeon who set up the department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, a first not only for CMC but also for the country. In 1966, she expanded the services of the department with the establishment of the first inpatient rehabilitation institute in the country.

She received the Padmashri in 1972, the fourth highest civilian award, for her services in medicine.

Mary Varghese, known as the 'Wheelchair Surgeon' was an inspirational figure to many and her biography 'Take my hand: the remarkable story of Dr. Mary Verghese' was written by American writer, Dorothy Clarke Wilson.

Hilda Lazarus

Padmashri Hilda Lazarus, one of the foremost physicians of her time, was CMC's first Indian principal and its first Indian director (1948 to 1954).

Owing to her training, experience and proven administrative abilities – she was formerly Principal of Lady Hardinge Medical College, Delhi - and her Christian commitment, she was the first choice when an Indian administrator was sought.



Taking over the reins in her late fifties, she provided strong leadership at a time when CMC was facing many crises. It was during her principalship that the institution was first granted permanent affiliation to the Madras University, and also opened its doors to male medical students for the first time.

Belle Chone Oliver



Belle Chone Oliver, who served as the first full-time secretary of the Christian Medical Association of India, campaigned tirelessly to make her dream of a Christian medical college in India a reality.

It was Oliver who first proposed, in 1936, that a Christian medical college be created by making the medical school for women in Vellore co-educational.

After the creation of the medical college, Oliver worked to maintain it and to ensure its survival by identifying Indian doctors who would be able to lead, like Hilda Lazarus and Jacob Chandy.

Delia Houghton

Delia M Houghton was the first registered nurse to work in CMC and was responsible for both the nursing services and education.

She took charge as its first Nursing Superintendent, and it was under her leadership that formal nursing training was begun at CMC, with what was known as the Lower Grade Course. Later, with her able colleague, Vera Pitman, nursing education was provided at a higher grade level.



Delia Houghton, known for her impeccable work ethic, served the institution for more than three decades.

Lucy Peabody



Lucy Whitehead McGill Waterbury Peabody, an American Baptist missionary, was a powerhouse fund-raiser who worked along with Ida Scudder to raise money to set up the medical school for women.

Her prodigious work over a lifetime was not confined to the institution. She also helped raise funds for the establishment of seven Asian women's colleges in the early 1920s, and served on the boards of the Shanghai Medical College, CMC Vellore and the Women's Christian College at Chennai.

It is remarkable that Peabody, who raised thousands of dollars for the cause of women's medical training, campaigned at a time when the world was reeling under a Depression and a World War.

Vera Pitman

Vera Pitman, who was originally assigned to missionary service in China, came to CMC and served as its Nursing Superintendent from 1928 to 1962.

After the demise of Delia Houghton, Pitman, who had been working along with Houghton for many years, took over the full responsibilities of organising the teaching of nursing students and the nursing services.



Apart from her contributions to the institution, she was also deeply interested in the development of the nurse as an individual and contributed at a state and national level to better the profession. She revised the Handbooks of the Trained Nurses' Association of India in 1958 and assisted with and edited other text books.

The note of the CMC Council at the time of her retirement said that she "methodically educated others to replace her out of every office she held".

Lillian Hart



Lillian Hart, who was the sister of Louisa Hart, was a trained nurse and a missionary of the American Arcot Mission. She worked at the roadside clinics along with Ida Scudder, in the early 1900s, and was the first nurse with formal training to serve in CMC.

She was Head Nurse of the hospital and the Nursing Tutor. Young village girls were painstakingly taught nursing care by Hart using a syllabus she had prepared herself. Later, her students worked in the hospital under her supervision. When Houghton joined the institution, Hart assisted her in her work.