

**The Courage of Her Convictions:  
The Story of Miriam Brailey**

**By  
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*She is the lone woman in a photograph of distinguished scientists -- men acclaimed and revered by their successors (Figure 1). But more than 60 years later no one recognizes her, despite the company she is in. Wade Hampton Frost, Morton Levin, James Watt, -- each is recalled for his contributions to epidemiology and public health, for the work done and the papers still quoted today. The name Miriam Brailey -- written on a piece of loose-leaf paper tucked in the envelope that contained the photo -- may also have commanded respect, affection, perhaps even awe, at sometime in the past. To be the only woman in so distinguished a group might make her a pioneer in her field, or a role model. Whether through her professional accomplishments or personal history, she must be someone worth remembering.*

This is the story of Miriam Esther Brailey, M.D., Dr.P.H., an exceptional woman born with the twentieth century who graduated from both The Johns Hopkins Schools of Medicine and of [then] Hygiene and Public Health. She went on to serve the citizens of Baltimore City and both the public and private sectors and to meet life's challenges with determination and faith, even at the risk of her own security.

### **The New England Years (1900-1926)**

Miriam Esther Brailey was born on January 28, 1900, to Edwin Stanton Brailey and his wife Florence Allen Brailey, in the village of East Barnard near the township of Pomfret, Vermont. Her early life was spent as the daughter of New England dirt farmers.<sup>1</sup>

The town of Woodstock, the county seat of Windsor County, lies about ten miles to the south of Pomfret, and it is here that Miriam attended high school. She traveled by "stage" -- an

automobile used for transport between the towns -- with other boys and girls her age, boarding in Woodstock during the week, returning to East Barnard on weekends. She graduated from Woodstock High School in 1918.<sup>1</sup>

It was through the generosity of her aunt, Lucy Edna Allen, an instructor of mathematics and physics at the Thayer Academy in Braintree, Massachusetts, that Miriam and her siblings were given the opportunity to attend college.<sup>1</sup> In September 1918, Miriam entered Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, not far from her father's birthplace of Amherst, the home of another Mount Holyoke graduate, poet Emily Dickinson.

For her major, Miriam selected zoology, with a concentration in embryology. Miriam was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in March 1922, and graduated with an A. B. degree on June 13<sup>th</sup> of that year, with 210 other young women.<sup>2,3</sup>

At least two historical events took place while Miriam was at Mount Holyoke which undoubtedly had an impact on her view of the world: the First World War came to end with the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, and women were given the right to vote in 1920. Two of her brothers saw service in the War, which perhaps planted the seeds of pacifism within Miriam.<sup>1</sup> Because she was an intelligent young woman with a tremendous desire for knowledge, one would assume that Miriam was an advocate of women's rights.<sup>4</sup> From 1922 to 1924, Miriam served as an instructor in embryology in the Department of Zoology at Mt. Holyoke, earning \$1,000 a year. During that time, her manuscript "Conditions Favoring Maturation of Eggs of *Asterias Forbseii*,"<sup>5</sup> was published in *The American Journal of Physiology*. This would have been quite an accomplishment for someone of twenty-three, and especially for a woman. Miriam left her position at Mount Holyoke in 1924 to serve as a

medical technician and physician's assistant to a Dr. Joslyn in Lynn, Massachusetts. Perhaps one reason was financial: her annual salary under Dr. Joslyn was \$1,200.<sup>6</sup>

In July of 1926, *The Mount Holyoke Alumnae Quarterly* carried the following announcement: "Miriam Brailey will enter Johns Hopkins Medical School in the fall. She has received a fellowship covering tuition and living for the four years of the medical course, and for a possible fifth year if she wishes to specialize in public health work."<sup>7</sup> Miriam never learned the name of the person responsible for financing her medical and doctoral training at Johns Hopkins. When Mount Holyoke officials summoned her to tell her of her good fortune, they said that her benefactor preferred to remain anonymous.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Baltimore Years (1926-1959)**

When Miriam arrived in Baltimore in 1926, she came to a city of more than 730,000 people living in an era of relative prosperity. The municipal government had grown tremendously in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as evidenced by huge improvements in sewage and drainage systems, and in the safety of the water supply. There were still major battles to be fought in the health arena, however, and these would multiply with the onset of the Depression, which saw the rise of the "ghetto" and the process of decay begin in the inner city.<sup>8</sup>

The Johns Hopkins Hospital and School of Medicine are located in an area -- then and now -- of economic disadvantage. Founded by its namesake, a Quaker businessman, the hospital soon achieved an international reputation, but still served the medical needs of the surrounding residents. This is the population Miriam would attend to for her entire professional life. From the time its doors first opened, the School of Medicine accepted qualified female candidates. In

Miriam Brailey's class, twelve of the sixty-nine students who went on to graduate as the Class of 1930 were women.<sup>9</sup> Among the men in Miriam's class was one who went on to become a celebrity of sorts: Frank G. Slaughter was twenty-two when he graduated with his medical degree in 1930, an amazing feat in itself.<sup>9</sup> He went on to write more than fifty novels in his lifetime, most with a medical or religious theme, as well as to practice medicine, eventually turning to writing as a fulltime career.<sup>10</sup> Although Miriam's literary efforts were limited to her own field, she would share with Slaughter a gift for intertwining science and faith.

Apparently, Miriam had no intention of going into private practice following receipt of her medical degree. Adhering to the terms of her fellowship, she pursued a doctor of public health degree (Dr.P.H.) in the Department of Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health. In doing so, she determined the path of her career for the next three decades. The first professor of epidemiology in the United States, Wade Hampton Frost, was chairman of the department during Miriam's tenure as a doctoral student. Frost had recently become interested in applying epidemiological methods to tuberculosis, the Number One killer in the early part of the twentieth century. He spent the last ten years of his life investigating and analyzing data from a number of TB studies, including material from the tuberculosis clinic at the Harriet Lane Children's Home on the grounds of the Johns Hopkins Hospital.<sup>11</sup> Miriam Brailey would go on to direct the clinic later in her career.

Miriam began working with Dr. Frost on his tuberculosis studies, and her unpublished thesis, accepted in 1931, was titled "A preliminary analysis of certain records of the tuberculosis clinic of the Harriet Lane Home: I. Tuberculosis infection in children of tuberculous families; II. The history to adolescence of children shown to be tuberculous during infancy."<sup>12</sup> She received

her Dr. P.H. degree in epidemiology from the School that spring, again one of 69 graduates but this time one of five women.<sup>13</sup>

At the age of 31, Miriam had reached an educational peak and begun a demanding and rewarding career. Of Miriam, personally, it can be said that, in appearance, she was striking largely for her height, which was approximately six feet. She wore her dark hair in a bun, and her glasses -- rimless with thick lenses -- gave her a scholarly appearance, appropriate for a blue stocking but overshadowing her attractiveness. She carried a girlish voice well into middle age, along with a sharp sense of humor and an outspokenness that etched into the memories of those who knew her.<sup>1</sup> She enjoyed reading and attending concerts, and was active in her Presbyterian church.<sup>6</sup> After rejecting a proposal of marriage in her early twenties, there was no hint of romance in her life,<sup>1</sup> but she was the product of an era when a highly educated woman was still an anomaly and one who combined career and family was rare.

One of Miriam's assignments as an intern at Johns Hopkins proved to be critical to establishing battery casings as sources of lead poisoning in Baltimore and elsewhere. Under the directions of Huntington Williams, director of the Baltimore City Health Department and a graduate of the first class of the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, Miriam sought out the origin of a mysterious illness affecting a number of Baltimore's poorer residents. A 1933 article in the Journal of the American Medical Association (now JAMA) includes Miriam's report of her neighborhood search for the source of lead poisoning of an unconscious 7-year-old black girl who was brought into the Harriet Lane Hospital by her family. As Miriam searched inside the patient's house, she could not find the "fresh paint or plaster" that she assumed, following recent reports, was the probable source of lead poisoning in children. Melrose Easter, a neighbor "whose breath was strong with whiskey," escorted Miriam around the

house, commenting that the child's mother, too, "had not been herself" since moving into their present house. Easter wondered to Miriam if they could have gotten sick from burning pieces of old batteries" for warmth and cooking: "the smell was bad, even made the food taste bad"; it appeared to him they might be "breathing in the vapors).<sup>14(p.1485)</sup> In a 2003 article chronicling how medical experts and others investigated sources of lead poisoning, author Christopher Sellers notes that "[T]his doctor's own admission of uncertainty about the inner city's impact on her patient opened her ears to Easter's a-medical thinking. In the process, the American medical understanding of lead's environmental pathways widened."<sup>15 p.281)</sup>

Throughout the 30's -- both Miriam's and the century's -- Miriam followed the course of her career at Hopkins. She continued her clinical work as well as her research on tuberculosis in children and was named an Instructor in both the Department of Pediatrics in the School of Medicine and in the Department of Epidemiology in the School of Hygiene and Public Health. In the latter department, she had the distinction of being the first female faculty member and of teaching epidemiology courses with Dr. Frost; she was promoted to Associate in 1936.<sup>16</sup> She published her research in peer review journals on occasion (Table 1), but it is an article published in the December 1936 issue of *The Councillor*, the quarterly publication of the Baltimore Council on Social Agencies, that stands out.<sup>17</sup> Entitled "The Needs of Tuberculous Children in Baltimore," the article shows how artfully Miriam incorporated science with her strong sense of social justice. Written with the cool, statistical logic of a scientist, the article nevertheless is a plea for fairness in treatment of tuberculosis patients in a segregated city:

Maryland has 305 tuberculosis beds for Negroes, yet in 1935 there were 614 fatal cases.

In contrast to this, 1103 beds are assigned to white patients, there being 749 fatal cases in

1935. Although Negroes in Maryland have four times the death rate, sanatorium facilities are one-third as numerous as for the white race.<sup>(p.2)</sup>

She goes on to argue that an intelligent social approach could lessen the importance of poverty and race as factors for tuberculosis susceptibility, and recommends an increase in the number of hospital and sanatorium beds for African Americans of all ages, along with other strategies for combating the disease. She also notes that the closest sanitarium for African American adults – Henryton State Hospital in Marriottsville -- is a long and expensive trip for the families of tuberculosis patients.

The article stands out for another reason as well. Despite her fierce battle against unequal health treatment for African-Americans, she was not immune to the stereotyping of her time, and several phrases in the article will strike modern readers as offensive. She refers to “the Baltimore negro, with his social temperament,” and goes on to state that “racial susceptibility, destitution, and irresponsibility combine to produce a death rate [in African Americans in Baltimore] four times greater than the white.”<sup>17 (p.4)</sup> However, in June 1939, she was an invited speaker at the first annual conference of Negro Tuberculosis Workers at Howard University Medical School in Washington, D.C.

The year 1941 was auspicious for Miriam. She was appointed director of two key institutions involved in Baltimore's struggle to combat tuberculosis: the Harriet Lane Tuberculosis Clinic, and the Bureau of Tuberculosis for the Baltimore City Health Department. In an article in the October 7, 1941 *Baltimore Sun*,<sup>18</sup> she spoke of the work ahead of her in her new job at the Health Department: "We have known for a long time how to control tuberculosis...but rarely has there been money or public interest sufficient to put into practice what we knew. Our job will be to find the cases earlier, and to take better care of them when they are found." She announced the

opening of a new tuberculosis clinic to be run by the Health Department at 1313 Druid Hill Avenue, adding to the two clinics already in operation. She touched on the shortage of medical professionals available during wartime, and stated "Baltimore's high tuberculosis death rate is largely attributable to the high tuberculosis rate among its large Negro population."<sup>18</sup> As director, she was responsible for a \$22,000 budget, of which \$7,000 would be used to open and operate the Druid Hill clinic. Her appointment was a sign of the growing interaction between the city's health department and Hopkins, and other bureaus with Hopkins-affiliated directors included Communicable Diseases and Child Hygiene.<sup>18</sup>

At the Harriet Lane Tuberculosis Clinic, Miriam was moving up the ladder in one of the premier children's medical facilities in the country. Funded largely by and named after the favorite niece and frequent hostess of the fifteenth U.S. President, James Buchanan, the Harriet Lane Children's Home fulfilled William Osler's plan to have a separate building on the Hopkins campus devoted entirely to the care of sick children. Harriet Lane Johnston had lost both of her sons to illness during their adolescence, and she herself did not live to see the opening of her legacy in 1912. The home came under the Department of Pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins Hospital; its tuberculosis clinic was a natural laboratory for the observation and follow-up of children who fell victim to the disease. Miriam participated in and then conducted what was known as the Harriet Lane Study, which involved following the same cohort of children and their families for years.<sup>19</sup> Her warm, friendly manner won her a loyal following among her patients.<sup>20</sup>

With two demanding positions to fill, Miriam was clearly driven by work. She shared a home in the Northwood Apartments at 4422 Marble Hall Road in the Waverly section of Baltimore with Dr. Harriet Guild, a New England blue stocking like Miriam. Dr. Guild was older than Miriam by less than a year, and she was a product of Vassar College, rather than Mount

Holyoke. The daughter of a general practitioner in Windham, Connecticut, Harriet received her medical degree from Johns Hopkins in 1925.<sup>21</sup> In 1930, she was appointed director of the Pediatric Diabetic Clinic at the Harriet Lane Children's Home, a position she held for thirty-five years, in addition to teaching and maintaining a private practice. She shared Miriam's traits of warmth and thoroughness, as well as her leadership ability, although she was less outspoken. Harriet Guild was a recognized international expert on nephrosis, which is a kidney disease in children, and diabetes in children, and she was one of the leading forces behind the founding of the Maryland Chapter of the National Nephrosis Foundation, which went on to become the National Kidney Foundation. She was honored on several occasions for her work in kidney diseases.<sup>22</sup> Their friendship continued after Miriam left Baltimore.<sup>1</sup>

It may have been during this period when Miriam's interest in the Quaker religion flourished. Certainly, the events of World War II would have contributed, if she already held pacifist beliefs. The Baltimore Health News, a publication of the Baltimore City Health Department, carried a statement in its April 1945 issue: "Dr. Brailey is a member of the Society of Friends and has a keen interest in interracial cooperation and in world organization to promote a durable peace."<sup>23</sup>

Miriam continued to be motivated by her commitment to poor children suffering from tuberculosis. The February 1949 edition of *The Mount Holyoke Alumni Quarterly* included the following item:

*Dr. Miriam E. Brailey* is still directing the Bureau of Tuberculosis Control for the Baltimore City Health Department. Remember the thrilling account of her work she gave at our reunion dinner last year? Miriam reports that last Election Day brought public approval in Baltimore of a hospital loan to be used in the construction of a new 300-bed

tuberculosis hospital for Negroes. For the academic year, beginning Sept. 1949, Miriam will have a leave of absence permitting her to return to Hopkins where she will be working with Dr. Janet Hardy on a book about tuberculosis in children.<sup>24</sup>

Miriam was clearly eager to publish the results of the Harriet Lane study, and apparently felt she should be at Hopkins full-time to write. In May of 1949, the New York *Herald Tribune* announced that Miriam was one of six scientists to receive a Tuberculosis Research Fellowship award to support her research efforts.<sup>25</sup> Her leave of absence from her city job was officially scheduled to begin on September 15, 1949;<sup>16</sup> the original termination date was June 15, 1950, but an extension was granted to December 30, 1950.<sup>26</sup> The final date subsequently turned out to be irrelevant.

The political climate of the country during this time was clouded by the Communist witch-hunts, led by Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin. The fear of Communism, stemming from the Cold War and election-year charges by Republicans that President Truman and the Democrats were soft on communism, was gaining momentum and spawning actions that in retrospect appear bizarre, but which were in fact legal (if not constitutional) at the time. In 1949, Maryland passed the Subversive Activities Act<sup>27</sup> (also called the Ober Act, after Frank C. Ober, the Maryland lawyer who chaired the commission that drafted it); it called for state and city employees to sign an oath of loyalty stating that they were not and had never been involved in subversive activities.

On July 29, 1949, the Homewood Society of Friends voted to oppose the signing of the loyalty statement.<sup>28</sup> It is likely that Miriam attended the meeting. At some point during the month of August, Miriam was told to sign the statement, but she refused.<sup>29</sup> The law was suspended after a local judge ruled that it was unconstitutional, but was reinstated the following February when the Court of Appeals reversed the judge's decision.<sup>30</sup> On March 14, 1950, all state and city

department heads were notified to ensure that all employees in their units had signed the required oaths of loyalty; those who had not done so would not receive paychecks. Three Quaker women, of whom Miriam Brailey was one, had not signed and continued to refuse to do so.<sup>29</sup>

The March 15, 1950 newspapers carried articles about the refusal of the three women, along with their pictures (Miriam's photo was the one used in the 1941 article announcing her start in her Health Department position).<sup>31</sup> In the article, Miriam is quoted as saying that her “conscience would be very uneasy if I purchased the continuation of my job at the price of cooperating with legislation which I think is dangerous and undemocratic and will accomplish nothing.” A separate article in that day's *Evening Sun* carried the headline, "Williams to Ask Ober Act Rule on Brailey."<sup>29</sup> "Williams" referred to Health Commissioner Huntington Williams, under whom Miriam had conducted her lead poisoning investigation in 1931; he now said that he would discuss with members of the city's law department whether Dr. Brailey needed to leave now while on unpaid leave, or if her departure should wait until her leave terminated. A headline in the following day's *Sun* stated "Dr. Brailey Must Go Now, Office Rules,"<sup>32</sup> and on the 17<sup>th</sup> another headline ran "Oust Dr. Brailey, Williams Warned,"<sup>33</sup> with a quote from J. Carl Opper, chief examiner of the Service Commission stating "If [Williams] doesn't do it in a week's time, I'm going after him." The article goes on to say that "Dr. Brailey reiterated yesterday that she won't sign ...To sign and thus comply with the Ober Act would mean co-operation 'with a law which persecutes minorities,' Dr. Brailey has said." <sup>33</sup>

Miriam was discharged from her position on March 20th. At least one letter to the editor followed her ouster, stating that the citizens of Baltimore had been robbed of one of their most valuable servants.<sup>34</sup> The personal cost to Miriam, in her defense of civil and personal liberties, must have been tremendous. Although her future at Hopkins appeared unthreatened, Miriam was

a single women at mid-life for whom security must have been paramount. Coming from a poor farming family, she would have been facing the knowledge that she was completely responsible for her future. Her vision, never strong, would only weaken as she grew older, putting her livelihood at risk.

Miriam continued to work on her book with Janet Hardy on the Harriet Lane study, and to prepare to file a lawsuit against the City of Baltimore. News of the lawsuit hit the newspapers on December 22, 1950,<sup>35,36</sup> and Miriam was quoted as saying she "is not, and never has been a subversive person as those words are commonly understood." In the suit, as reported by the *Evening Sun*, she went on to say that it was her "religious conviction that to sign the...statement required by the Subversive Activities Act would violate her religious principles and would be contrary to the fundamental principles of Christianity as interpreted by her and by members of the Society of Friends."<sup>36</sup> Her suit also named Huntington Williams; it was filed by attorneys John H. Skeen, Jr., Jess G. Schiffman, Eugene Feinblatt, and H. Warren Buckler, and stated that "subversive activities," as defined in the Act, were "unclear, ambiguous, obscure, vague, and uncertain."<sup>26</sup> The court was asked to rule that Miriam's dismissal from her job was null and void and that the Ober Act was unconstitutional. The Maryland State Archives holds no record of the outcome of the case, but on file is a demurral filed by Dr. Williams,<sup>37</sup> which, in effect, agreed that although the facts as stated in the lawsuit were correct, no legal action could be taken as the Ober Act had already withstood the test of constitutionality in earlier cases.<sup>30</sup> It is likely that the court agreed. Miriam never returned to her job with the Health Department. Of note, the Ober Act was rendered ineffective by an ACLU Supreme Court case in 1967,<sup>38</sup> but not repealed until 1978.<sup>39</sup>

In February 1951 Miriam was named Assistant Professor in Epidemiology. Soon after, she became Assistant Professor in Pediatrics and Medicine and Director of the Tuberculosis Section of

the Chest Clinic at the Johns Hopkins Hospital.<sup>16</sup> She worked to obtain money for the chest clinic and in 1954 the Maryland Tuberculosis Foundation awarded Hopkins \$14,000 for the clinic's newly organized tuberculosis program, which was cited for education, research, and consultation. The Baltimore City Health Department served as one of the program's coordinators.<sup>40</sup>

Miriam continued to work on her summary of the Harriet Lane Study, and she and Janet Hardy received money from the Commonwealth Fund to support their efforts.<sup>20</sup> George W. Comstock, M.D., Dr. P.H., Professor of Epidemiology at Hopkins and a student in that department during the 1950's, remembered Miriam during those years and says, "It would have been impossible not to like and respect [her]."<sup>41</sup> Outside of her professional world, Miriam was a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation ("working for a durable peace"), the Consumers Cooperative ("building toward a more sound economic order"), and, of course, the Society of Friends, to which she stated she was "contributing all I can to civilian relief and to improved international relations."<sup>16</sup> By this time, Baltimore's public schools were undergoing integration, and public transportation was no longer restricted, but hotels and restaurants were still segregated. In June 1957, *The Interchange*, the local newsletter of the Society of Friends, reported that she attended a conference on race relations in Wilmington, Ohio.<sup>42</sup> Attending the conference with Miriam was Doris Shamleffer, who along with Miriam lost her job when she refused to sign the oath of loyalty required by the Ober Act.<sup>31</sup>

In 1958, *Tuberculosis in White and Negro Children, Vols. I and II*, was published for the Commonwealth Fund by the Harvard University Press.<sup>43</sup> Dr. Janet Hardy wrote the first volume on the clinical aspects of tuberculosis; Miriam wrote the second volume, subtitled *The Epidemiologic Aspects of the Harriet Lane Study*. The book retailed for \$4.50.<sup>44</sup> In her foreword, Miriam acknowledged that the tuberculosis era of the United States was passing, thanks to the

emergence of antimicrobial treatment, but she notes that "(m)any countries, however, are still struggling with a high prevalence of tuberculosis for which little or no specific medication can be obtained. In both kinds of situations guidance is needed from long-term studies as to those factors and conditions which may be expected to alter prognosis in the tuberculous child."<sup>44</sup> She could not know the disease would re-emerge as a consequence of AIDS.

During the spring or summer of 1958, Miriam began visiting the Bruderhof Community of Oak Lake, near Farmington, Pennsylvania. It is possible that she learned about the Bruderhof through the Society of Friends, as Bruderhof leaders occasionally visited other religious organizations with similar spiritual foundations or invited such visitors to their communities.<sup>45</sup> The Bruderhof and the Quakers shared concerns for social justice and peace, as well as peace among races. The group was modeled after the first Christian churches, sharing property and work. Members focus their lives on the discipleship of Christ, serving God and humanity. The movement, with similarities to the Anabaptists, started in Germany about 1920, moved to England, then to Paraguay, and finally to the United States. At the time Miriam became interested, there were eight Bruderhof communities in existence.<sup>46</sup>

By now, Miriam had achieved a number of professional goals: she had witnessed the conquering of the disease -- at least in the U.S. -- that she had spent her working life fighting; she had published the findings of the 20-year family study she had conducted; and she had proven herself to be a successful fundraiser for the clinic she directed. Perhaps now it was time to move on to personal goals. In a letter she shared with several friends, Miriam expressed her reasons for her plan to leave Hopkins and join the Bruderhof: "this group life would provide for me a plan for my old age, and at the same time allow me to participate in an ideal I have always believed in and never had the chance or the courage to try."<sup>47</sup>

It is interesting that someone so fiercely independent and with such strong leadership ability as Miriam had would choose to join a closed, male-dominated society.<sup>48</sup> She had knowledge of the world and of the intricacies of science that would seem at odds with the more pastoral nature of the Bruderhof experience. But at this stage Miriam seemed determined to concentrate on her faith and her service to God. Although there is no reason to doubt its absence from her perspective in her previous work, her faith was now her daily focus. In that same letter to her friends, she goes on to say:

For me this movement is a much-needed demonstration of unity among widely differing cultural groups where people with a deep motivation work for each other instead of competing against each other. I have for years longed to try such an experiment in living, and now I have found a group without cant or false piety which attracts me. As you probably know, I will be fifty-nine next January. My specialty is a narrow one and I can stay on here only as I succeed in getting the annual grant for my work in tuberculosis.<sup>47</sup>

On April 1, 1959, Miriam formally resigned her positions at Johns Hopkins and left Baltimore to begin her new life at the Bruderhof Community at Oak Lake and the final chapter of her life.<sup>49</sup>

In 1964, a Mount Holyoke classmate visited Miriam and wrote to their alma mater describing Miriam as "a rare spirit," living in an atmosphere of "joy, peace, self-denial and love for fellowman," who, in spite of her deteriorating vision, was "radiant with happiness and beloved by all the great family she serves." She went on to write that "This is a classmate who has found her proper sphere."<sup>50</sup>

In early 1965 Miriam traveled back to Baltimore and Johns Hopkins for cataract surgery. A week or two after the surgery, she suffered a vitreous hemorrhage in one eye and soon developed sympathetic ophthalmia in the other, despite removal of the first eye.<sup>51</sup> Unable to

provide medical care to the Oak Lake community any longer ("No longer practicing medicine," she wrote to former Hopkins colleague Charlotte Silverman in December 1967, "and it's a real relief to shed that responsibility"<sup>52</sup>), Miriam was moved to Woodcrest, the Bruderhof community near Kingston, New York.<sup>51</sup>

Miriam Esther Brailey died suddenly of pneumonia on April 8, 1976, in a nursing home near the Woodcrest community and she is buried in the cemetery there.<sup>51</sup> Her obituary in the Fall 1976 *Mount Holyoke Alumni Quarterly* states that "Miriam was a prominent Quaker, peace worker, a great scientist, and a practical philanthropist. 1922 regards her with affection and high esteem."<sup>53</sup>

But 1976 does not quite mark the end of the story of Miriam Brailey. Her work on childhood tuberculosis continues to be cited, as in the 1995 JAMA editorial: "In her famous studies in Baltimore, Md, in the prechemotherapy era, Miriam Brailey showed that 16% of black children and 8% of white children infected with *M tuberculosis* before 3 years of age ultimately died of tuberculosis."<sup>54</sup> In 2000, the Department of Epidemiology of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health established the Miriam Brailey Scholarship Fund to support student research.<sup>55</sup> More recently – and as recently as 2013 -- her writings on childhood tuberculosis and the findings of the Harriet Lane Study are being still cited in peer-review journals.<sup>56-59</sup>

A friend who visited Miriam in the months before her death said that while Miriam was frail physically, she was mentally alert. "My strongest impression of her was of a person who already had one foot in heaven. She seemed sad, but at peace."<sup>60</sup> One would suppose that a woman who, throughout her life, had demonstrated the courage of her convictions, would have little to fear from what death might bring.

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Figure Legend.

The Department of Epidemiology, the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, 1935-36.

Top Row, left to right: Harry Timbres, James Watt, William T. Clark, and Albert Hardy

Bottom row, left to right: Miriam Brailey, Wade Hampton Frost (chairman); Ross Gauld, and Morton Levin.

The photo was a gift to the Department of Epidemiology at the (then) Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health by Dr. James Watt in 1998. Its use is courtesy of the The Alan Chesney Mason Archives of the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions.

**Table 1.** Partial Bibliography for Miriam E. Brailey

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