The Second National Association of Nurse Anesthetists
Annual Meeting

Key words: AANA Annual Meeting, Education, National Association of Nurse Anesthetists, Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists.

Introduction
The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) 1996 Annual Meeting is being held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from August 10-15, 1996. Sixty-two years ago the second Annual Meeting of the National Association of Nurse Anesthetists (renamed the AANA in 1939) was held in Philadelphia. The 1934 meeting provided the impetus for the modern day AANA nurse anesthesia educational programs including accreditation and certification. The meeting also shed light on certain practice issues and the early growth of state associations such as the Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists.

First NANA Annual Meeting, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 13-15, 1933
The first Annual Meeting of the National Association of Nurse Anesthetists (NANA) was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from September 13-15, 1933. The NANA Annual Meeting was held in conjunction with the American Hospital Association Annual Meeting from 1933 to 1975. The NANA was young and making great strides as seen in that anesthetists from 40 states attended the first Annual Meeting.1

The second NANA Annual Meeting was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from September 25-27, 1934 (Figure 1). A total of 193 nurse anesthetists registered for the meeting, which is an impressive number considering the Bulletin of the National Association of Nurse Anesthetists recorded a total of 878 members by the time of the second Annual Meeting.8 The NANA Board of Directors was made up of many founding members of the Association including Honorary President Agatha C. Hodgin, CRNA; President Gertrude Fife, CRNA; First Vice-President Hilda R. Salomon, CRNA; Second Vice-President Rosalie C. McDonald, CRNA; Third Vice-President Cora McKay, CRNA; Treasurer Lou E. Adams, CRNA; and Executive Secretary Florence H. Boswell, CRNA.

The second NANA Annual Meeting opened with a luncheon at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on Tuesday, September 25, 1934. The meeting was chaired by Hilda R. Salomon who was Chief Anesthetist at Jewish Hos-

Figure 1
Report of the second AANA Annual Meeting, 1934 (courtesy of the AANA Archives)
hospital in Philadelphia. The Bulletin of the National Association of Nurse Anesthetists referred to the luncheon as a "delightful occasion, affording an opportunity for meeting old friends and making new acquaintances, one of the pleasant and advantageous phases of attendance at these gatherings."2

Theresa A. McTurk, CRNA, Metropolitan Hospital of Philadelphia and President of the Philadelphia Association of Nurse Anesthetists gave the greeting to membership. Her words immortalized the pioneering spirit of the NANA which was founded in 1931. She also stressed the impact Philadelphia had on the history of anesthesia. In her speech to the membership, she stated:

"It is a privilege to be permitted to extend to you in behalf of the Philadelphia Anesthetists Association a most hearty welcome to the Quaker City, and to thank you for coming here for the Annual Meeting. Occasions of this kind have a function of binding together, organizing, and unifying our profession—as important as any specific discussion. Our society not only has remained alive but has lived; lived worthily, wrought steadily, sturdily and faithfully for the great purposes that called it into being; and now more than ever unanimity of purpose must be exacted.

Among the triumphs of medicine stand out those of Long and Morton of the United States when they first used ether; and of Simpson of Scotland when he first used chloroform. Without a doubt the man who intentionally first gave ether for surgical purposes following reasoned out observations was Crawford W. Long, a country doctor, of Jefferson, Georgia, in 1842. He was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1839. If you visit the University, ask to be shown the tablet dedicated to this pioneer. The nurse anesthetist has worked with the surgeon with devotion that has never failed, with constancy that has never faltered, and she gave her best skill as duty calls.

Philadelphia for many years was the medical center of the United States. The first medical school in the Colonies, now the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania, was founded here; the first almshouse and hospital in the Colonies was established here; and the first medical textbook published in America was here. The first training school for nurses in Philadelphia, the second to be organized in the United States, was established at the Philadelphia Hospital in 1884, with the late Alice Fisher of England in charge, who was recommended for the appointment by the immortal Florence Nightingale.

The name of the boat which William Penn sailed for America, when he founded Philadelphia in 1684, was "Welcome." It is this cherished Welcome that has been characteristic of the City of Brotherly Love since its foundation that is extended to you."

Gertrude Fife's Presidential Address brought to members' attention the "state of distressing times" the young Association was experiencing (Figure 2). She called for the improvement of the methods and uniform standards for teaching nurse anesthesia. She believed more emphasis should be

Figure 2
AANA Annual Meeting banquet, Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 25, 1934 (courtesy of the AANA Archives)
placed on the organization of hospital anesthesia departments and the teaching of anesthesia. She stated, “The apparent indifference to the significance of the work displayed by the schools that are attempting to teach the subject in a few weeks or a few months must be discouraged, and on the other hand the hospitals must be encouraged to allow their graduate anesthetists more time for advancement and study, and contact with others in the field—a privilege especially available at the meetings of this organization.” Ms. Fife’s and other early nurse anesthetists such as Helen Lamb’s early insights on the education of nurse anesthetists provided the impetus for the creation of the AANA’s certification examination (1945), Assembly of School Faculty (1946), and accreditation program (1952).

Ms. Fife was also distressed over the relationship between medical doctors and nurse anesthetists. Her speech was on the heals of the landmark legal case of Dagmar A. Nelson, CRNA, a California nurse anesthetist, which established the legality of the practice of nurse anesthesia in 1934. The deteriorating relationship became evident during the Association’s intensive program to organize within the states. She stated, “In the past six months we have heard rumors, and in some instances actual steps are being taken by a certain group of doctors in the medical profession, to try to limit the right to administer anesthetics to those who hold medical degrees. This movement is the result of the economic disturbances, and is not being viewed with favor by the more prominent surgeons and hospitals throughout this country.”

She felt nurse anesthetists could not turn a deaf ear to this controversy. She advocated improvement in the national education through the standardization and organization of nurse anesthetists into state associations and the national association to protect the their rights to practice.

**Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists**

The Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists (PANA) was one of the first state associations, along with Alabama and Ohio, to organize in the fall of 1931. The objectives of the Association were “to advance the science and art of anesthesiology, to develop educational standards and technique in the administration of various anesthetic drugs, and to provide the surgeons and the hospitals with a group of well trained, efficient women.”

Mary E. Walton, CRNA, served as the Pennsylvania Association’s first President. On Thursday, September 27, 1934, at the NANA Annual Meeting, the PANA Board of Directors decided that the Pennsylvania Association’s Annual Meeting would be held in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Hospital Association. The PANA Board of Directors in attendance included President Mary E. Walton, Mercy Hospital, Pittsburgh; Vice-President Leola Richter, CRNA, Presbyterian Hospital, Pittsburgh; Treasurer Frances Shellenberger, CRNA, Montefiore Hospital, Pittsburgh; and Secretary Mary Roenbaugh, CRNA, West Penn Hospital, Pittsburgh.

On September 7, 1935, the PANA affiliated with the NANA (Figure 3) and had 144 members with an annual budget of $607.47.

![Figure 3](image)

**Conclusion**

The second AANA Annual Meeting documented a young Association’s pioneering spirit in its efforts to improve anesthesia services through education and a greater organization. Today, the Annual Meeting continues to promote the vision of the Association’s founding members.

**REFERENCES**