The annual luncheon of the Boston Committee of Frontier Nursing University took place on a rainy day at the beautiful Dedham Country and Polo Club, in Dedham, MA. Wet leaves of every color dotted the gorgeous landscape as Mrs. Patsy Lawrence, retiring Boston Committee Chair, organized the dining room. Much to the delight of the guests, this came complete with a roaring fire, trays of cheese and fruits, and several warming beverages. As a young Boston woman, Patsy traveled to Frontier to become a Courier and enjoyed the experience of a lifetime. Soon after, as a new bride in Philadelphia, she recalled with a laugh how Mary Breckinridge insisted she start a Philadelphia Committee for Frontier. Patsy followed her “orders,” and subsequently, when Patsy and her young family returned to Boston, Patsy formed the Boston Committee. She has led Boston well for decades with her heart and soul, making every friend and supporter of Frontier feel welcome and appreciated. Now she “hands over the reins” to Lees Breckinridge Dunn Yunits, great-niece of Mary Breckinridge.

Dr. Susan Stone, President of FNU, spoke with much enthusiasm about the continuing progress of the many programs and courses of study now available, including the future possibility of a degree program for psychiatric nurse practitioners. Lois Cheston, former Courier, who still volunteers at Massachusetts General Hospital, nodded in agreement that psychiatric services are in dire need everywhere—not just in rural and underserved areas.

Esther Mulroy, another former Courier, discovered Frontier in the 1970’s, and had interesting memories, including her first birth experience when she swiftly handed over the flashlight she was holding during delivery in order to step outside and lose lunch. One must further consider the poor midwife left in the dark!

Butternut bisque came to the table as Sage Ungerleider, CNEP Class 124, who is employed as a nurse at Mass. General, talked of broadening her nursing education via the distance-learning program of midwifery. Sage had felt the overwhelming magnetism of the mission after visiting Wendover for her orientation, and was delighted to be surrounded by Frontier aficionados. Fran Keene, daughter of Patsy Lawrence, returned from her service as a Courier (also in the 1970’s) with the motivation to pursue nursing, which she has done, and to stay involved with Frontier. Lois Cheston best remembered her role teaching the British midwives how to drive!

The chicken caesar salad arrived as the group was all ears for Suzi Kahn, longtime President of the “Kentuckians of Boston.” Suzi exuded personality talking about her role bringing notable Kentuckians to their organization’s bi-annual gatherings. Mental notes were taken that Frontier’s own Kentucky notables, Dr. Susan Stone, and the lovely Director of Development and Alumni Relations, Denise Barrett, should be high on their guest list in the near future. Denise then happily relayed the successful events of the recent 75th Anniversary, held in Lexington, KY, in October, 2014.

The vast information pool about Mary Breckinridge grew further when hearing the extraordinary tales of Karen Foster—professor of art and archeology at Yale University. Many years ago, Karen and her young family sought out adventure in France, only to discover that their adopted town had serviced the works of Mary Breckinridge, or “MB” as Karen fondly talks of her, in their efforts to restore devastated France after World War I. Karen gained so much from her French townsmen and women that she delved into translating into French the many letters that “MB” had written to her mother, and publishing the beautiful collection in a book called “Au Secours Des Enfants Du Soissonnais—Lettres americaines de Mary Breckinridge 1919-1921.” Or, “With the Help Of the Children Of Soissonnais - American Letters of Mary Breckinridge 1919-1921.” Some now thirst for these letters to be published in English!

Jeff Miller of Signature Healthcare/Brockton Hospital interested all when talking of the hospital’s exciting new venture restoring home health care to families, which has been shown to drastically reduce readmissions to their hospital. Dr. Susan Stone said she “got goose bumps” learning of the success of this program. Sue Joss, Director of the Brockton Neighborhood Health Center, spoke of the value of their organization delivering health aid to lower-income families, and their prolific use of midwives. Caroline Standley, long time supporter of Frontier,