

Part IV - New Information on Dix that makes her a more complicated individual

1. *Dorothea Dix came from an alcoholic family and abusive father. Dorothea runs away from home when 12 years old. She stays with her grandmother who does not have much money.*
2. *Dix nurtured her public image, closely monitored what was said about her. She often lied about her life to appear more favorably.*
3. *Dix wasn't a reformer. . Most people involved in reform movements supported many causes. Dix did not. She was not concerned about abolishing slavery, ending poverty and homelessness, or Temperance (anti-drinking) issues. In fact, Dorothea was not very interested in woman's rights. She felt that once a woman married her place was in the home.*
4. *When some of the mental hospitals Dix helped establish began to fail in the 1850s she said they were failing because of the Irish immigrants who were coming into the U.S. at this time. She assumed that the Irish were inferior people and prone to mental illness. Like many people at this time she wanted to limit the immigration of Catholics into the United States.*
5. *Although she was from Massachusetts (a free state) she greatly admired white southern society and culture. Dix also thought, like many people at this time, that blacks were not equal to whites.*
6. *When the Civil War began Dix went to the White House and volunteered to lead to lead nurses for the Union cause. Her rules for the nurses recruited, who she thought might see war as a romantic place to find a husband, included:*
 - *the nurses must be in their rooms before nine at night.*
 - *the nurses must not go to any place of amusement in the evening*
 - *no woman under thirty "apply to serve in the government hospitals"*
 - *"All nurses are required to be plain-looking women."*
 - *Nurses "dresses must be brown or black, with no bows, no curls, and no hoop skirts."*

Sources:

- *Carolyn Cox, University of the Pacific, lecture to Oakland Unified School District Teaching American History grant, March, 22, 2005, <http://www.teachingamericanhistory.us/speakers/cox2.html>*
- *Margaret Muckenhoupt, Dorothea Dix: Advocate for Mental Health Care, Oxford, 2003.*