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FRONTIER NURSING SERVICE: *Saddlebag Babies*

Saving lives on horseback... sums up the role of Mary Breckinridge as told by Marie Bartlett of Asheville in her fourth non-fiction book entitled "Frontier Nursing Service."

Born to an influential Kentucky family in 1881, Breckinridge opened the FNS in 1925 in Leslie County, Kentucky, one of the poorest regions in America.

She recruited and trained determined nurse-midwives to serve in Eastern Kentucky...where women were more likely to die from childbirth than nearly any other condition. It was an impoverished area where there were no hospitals or doctors.

The story is told in human terms, focusing on how such a successful organization was built out of commitment and compassion against all odds. In 1948, the New York Times sent an unnamed reporter to describe the noble cause. "Every question of health that arises within five miles in any direction from her station is the concern of the frontier nurse," wrote the reporter.

In the process, Breckinridge and her hardy recruits reversed one of the highest infant mortality rates in the country. Those fortunate infants became known as "saddlebag babies" by their grateful families.

Her legacy is the Mary Breckinridge Hospital in Hyden, Kentucky, five rural health clinics, a home health agency and the FNS School of Midwifery and Family Nursing --- the largest in the United States. In total, FNS serves an area of 700 square miles.

Since 1925, FNS has registered 64,000 patients and delivered 17,053 babies with only "11 maternal deaths."

The book will be published in mid-December by McFarland & Company of Jefferson, NC. For more information, please contact Chuck Werle of Carolina Image Builders at 828.299.0813 or at imagebuc@bellsouth.net.