

**MODESTE HARGIS: MY CITY'S FIRST
FEMALE PHARMACIST**

Modeste Hargis was Pensacola Florida's youngest female pharmacist. This was interesting to me because it made me think of my mom looking into her bathroom medicine cabinet whenever I do not feel good and looking at the different bottles and boxes reading which type of medicine she was going to give me to make me feel better.

It must have been hard growing up in America during the late 1800's and early 1900's as a woman but still being strong and determined to be in a job that was uncommon for a woman, yet she went on to do it and succeed. I even found out that she did important research on the lives of different people through interviews when she did work at the University of Central Florida, recording important first hand accounts of different black and Greek people's lives and experiences. For these reasons, I would have liked to have met Ms. Hargis. Let me share some background information I learned about her.

She was born in 1875, the same year the Civil Rights Act was passed in America, in Pensacola, Florida. Modeste was the youngest of 6 children. It looks like her love for medicine came from her father because he was a doctor in Pensacola and helped start the Pensacola Hospital in 1868 as well as many other important things in the local area related to research and yellow fever. Modeste would follow in his footsteps because she too would begin a medical career.

I read in an article that Ms. Hargis would follow her dad when he would be called to see patients and he would teach her everything he could when she showed interest in pharmacology because he knew it was rare for a woman to be in this profession. Ms. Hargis' hard work and determination did pay off when she passed the state pharmacy exam in 1893 when she was 18 years old. Her father passed away not long after this and he surely would have been proud of her accomplishments.

Modeste eventually opened her own pharmacy and it moved to several places, but it eventually was stationed at 611 N. Barcelona in Pensacola. Modeste worked at her pharmacy for the rest of her life all while doing other things she enjoyed, until she retired at the age of 54. She loved playing the violin and also whistling, and in 1927 was featured on a radio channel about her whistling talent.

Modeste passed away in 1948 but now that I know about her, I will think about her every time I go into a pharmacy in Pensacola and be proud to know she was the first female pharmacist in the city I live in.