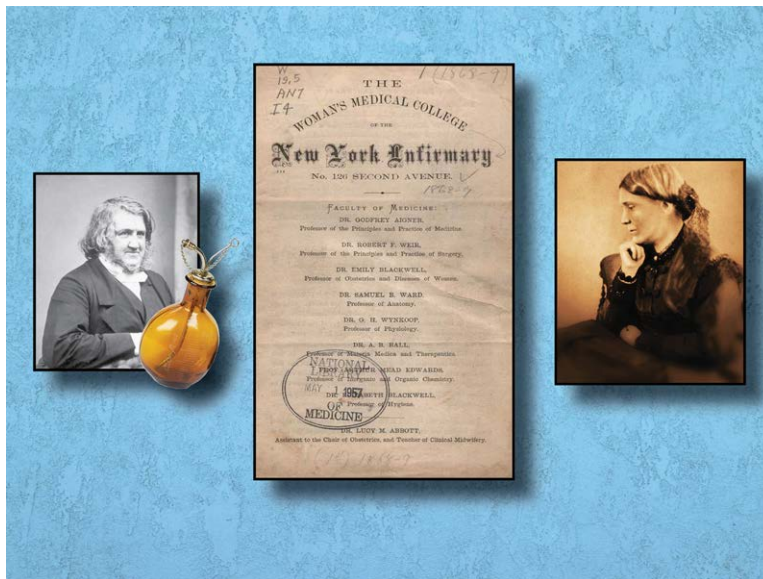


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Skirting Male Chauvinism in Physician Training: Dr. Emily Blackwell and the Woman's Medical College



After overcoming great obstacles, Emily Blackwell, M.D. (1826 to 1910), the brilliant and bold younger sister of Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D., became the third woman to earn her medical degree in the United States. A month after her graduation in 1854, she boarded a transatlantic steamship to seek a training opportunity with Professor James Y. Simpson, renowned pioneer of chloroform anesthesia and Chair of Midwifery at the University of Edinburgh. To Emily's relief, Simpson welcomed her warmly and offered to help her achieve her goals. She marveled at his diagnostic acumen and skill with chloroform administration. However, Emily soon found herself *seeing* more than *doing*. Writing to sister Elizabeth, Emily voiced the hunger of countless women physicians who would follow: "The difficulties are by no means great if the places of study were open. Give me the opportunities [Simpson's] assistant has had. I would be more skillful than he is." The sisters Blackwell dreamed of a world in which women could reach their full professional potential. To that end, they founded their own Woman's Medical College of the New York Infirmary (est. 1868), which provided rigorous clinical training and "held open the door for women until broader gates...sw[a]ng wide for their admission." Once medical schools in the United States became coeducational, the Woman's Medical College would close. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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