

Healing

Theodora

THEODORA

Theodora's birthplace is most commonly attributed to Cyprus or Syria around 500 AD. Her father was of the Green faction in Constantinople. After her father's death, her mother brought her children to the hippodrome and presented them as suppliants to the Blue faction. From then on Theodora would be their supporter.

Theodora in her early years might have worked in a brothel. Later she performed on stage. Employment as an actress at the time would include both "indecent exhibitions on stage" and providing sexual services off stage.

At the age of 16, she traveled to North Africa as the companion of a Syrian official to Libya. Abandoned and maltreated, she settled in Alexandria where she met Patriarch Timothy III who converted her to Miaphysite Christianity.

She returned to Constantinople in 522, gave up acting, settling as a wool spinner in a house near the palace. Her beauty, wit and amusing character drew attention from Justinian, who wanted to marry her. However, he was heir of the throne to Emperor Justin I, and a Roman law prevented government officials from marrying actresses. Empress Euphemia opposed the marriage. When Euphemia died, Justin repealed the law, and Justinian married Theodora.

Theodora proved herself an able leader during the Nika riots. The two rival political factions in the Empire, the Blues and the Greens, started a riot in January 532 during a chariot race in the hippodrome. The riots stemmed from many grievances. The rioters set public buildings on fire, and proclaimed a new emperor, Hypatius. Unable to control the mob, Justinian and his officials prepared to flee. At a meeting of the government council, Theodora passionately argued a ruler should die rather than leave the palace, saying, "royal purple is the noblest shroud."

Her determined speech convinced them all to remain, including Justinian, who had been preparing to run. As a result, Justinian ordered his troops to attack the demonstrators. His generals attacked the hippodrome, killing over 30,000 rebels. Justinian never forgot that it was Theodora who had saved his throne.

Following the Nika revolt, Justinian and Theodora made Constantinople the most splendid city the world had seen for centuries.

Theodora participated in Justinian's legal and spiritual reforms, and her involvement in the increase of the rights of women was substantial. She has laws passed prohibiting forced prostitution and closed brothels. She created a convent called the Repentance, where ex-prostitutes could support themselves. She expanded the rights of women in divorce and property ownership, instituted the death penalty for rape, forbade exposure of unwanted infants, gave mothers some guardianship rights over their children, and forbade the killing of a wife who committed adultery.

Theodora worked against her husband's support of Chalcedonian



Christianity. In spite of Justinian being Chalcedonian, Theodora founded a Miaphysite monastery in Sykae and provided shelter in the palace for Miaphysite leaders who faced opposition from Chalcedonian Christians. When the Chalcedonian Patriarch Ephraim provoked a violent revolt in Antioch, eight Miaphysite bishops were invited to Constantinople and Theodora housed them in the palace that had been Justinian and Theodora's own dwelling before they became emperor and empress.

In Nobatae, south of Egypt, the inhabitants were converted to Miaphysite Christianity about 540. Justinian wanted them converted to Chalcedonian Christianity. Theodora was determined that they should be Miaphysites. Justinian sent Chalcedonian missionaries to go with presents to Silko, the king of the Nobatae. But Theodora prepared her own missionaries and wrote the duke of Thebaid instructions to delay her husband's missionaries. Fearing Theodora more than Justinian, the Duke complied. When the Chalcedonian missionaries reached Silko, they were too late. Theodora had triumphed.

Theodora died of what was probably cancer on June 28, 548 at the age of 48. Her body was buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles, in Constantinople.



Clara Barton

CLARA BARTON

Clarissa "Clara" Harlowe Barton was born on December 25, 1821. Her father was Capt. Stephen Barton, a member of the local militia and a selectman. Barton's mother was Sarah Stone Barton.

When 3 years old, Clara was sent to school with her brother Stephen where she excelled in reading and spelling but was extremely timid. Her parents tried to rid her of this by sending her to Col. Stones High School, but their strategy failed. Clara Barton became more timid, depressed and would not eat. She was removed and brought back home to regain her health.

Upon her return, her family relocated to help a family member who had died and left his wife with four children and a farm. Clara began to play with her male cousins, and to their surprise, she was good at keeping up with such tasks as horseback riding. It was not until after she injured herself that Clara's mother questioned her playing with the boys. She invited one of Clara's female cousins over to help develop her femininity. Her cousin taught her how to engage in proper social skills.

She was ten when she assigned herself the task of nursing her brother David back to health from a severe injury he received from falling from a barn. She learned how to distribute the prescribed medication to her brother, as well as how to place leeches on his body to bleed him. She continued to care for David long after doctors had given up. Her brother made a full recovery.

Clara Barton became an educator in 1838 for a dozen years in schools in Canada and West Georgia. Barton fared well as a teacher and knew how to handle rambunctious children. In 1850 Barton decided to further her education by pursuing writing and languages at the Clinton Liberal Institute in New York. Following these studies, Barton opened a free school in Bordentown, New Jersey; the first free school to be opened in the state. The attendance under her leadership grew to 603, but instead of hiring Barton to head the school, the board hired a man.

Frustrated she moved to Washington D.C. and began work as a clerk in the US Patent Office. This was the first time a woman had received a substantial clerkship in the federal government and at a salary equal to a man's salary. Subsequently, under political opposition to women working in government offices, her position was reduced to that of copyist, and in 1856, under the administration of James Buchanan, eliminated entirely.

Before her father died, Clara Barton was able to talk to him about the war effort. Her father convinced her that it was her duty as a Christian to help the soldiers. In the April following his death, Barton returned to Washington to gather medical supplies. Ladies' Aid societies helped in sending bandages, food, and clothing that would later be distributed during the Civil War. In the August of 1862, Barton finally gained permission from Quartermaster Daniel Rucker to work on



the front lines. She worked to distribute stores, clean field hospitals, apply dressings, and serve food to wounded soldiers in close proximity to several battles, including Cedar Mountain, Second Bull Run, Antietam, and Fredericksburg. In 1864 she was appointed by Union General Benjamin Butler as the "lady in charge" of the hospitals at the front of the Army of the James. Among her more harrowing experiences was an incident in which a bullet tore through the sleeve of her dress without striking her and killed a man to whom she was tending. She is known as the "Angel of the Battlefield."

After the war, she ran the Office of Missing Soldiers. Barton then achieved widespread recognition by delivering lectures around the country, which lasted well over a year, about her war experiences. After her countrywide tour she was both mentally and physically exhausted. She was under doctor's orders to go somewhere that would take her far from her current work. She packed up and went on a retreat to Europe. She met Susan B. Anthony and began a long association with the woman's suffrage movement. She also became acquainted with Frederick Douglass and became an activist for civil rights.

In 1869, during her trip to Geneva, Switzerland, Barton was introduced to the Red Cross and Dr. Appia; who later would invite her to be the representative for the American branch of the Red Cross and even help her find financial beneficiaries for the start of the American Red Cross.

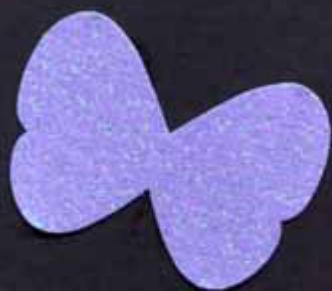
At the beginning of the Franco-Prussian War, in 1870, she assisted the Grand Duchess of Baden in the preparation of military hospitals, and gave the Red Cross society much aid during the war. At the joint request of the German authorities and the Strasbourg Comité de Secours, she superintended the supplying of work to the poor of Strasbourg in 1871, after the Siege of Paris. In 1871, she had charge of the public distribution of supplies to the destitute people of Paris. At the close of the war, she was decorated with the Golden Cross of Baden and the Prussian Iron Cross.

When Barton returned to the United States, she inaugurated a movement to gain recognition for the International Committee of the Red Cross by the United States government. In 1873, she began work on this project. In 1878, she met with President Rutherford B. Hayes, who expressed the opinion of most Americans at that time which was the U.S. would never again face a calamity like the Civil War. Barton finally succeeded during the administration of President Chester Arthur, using the argument that the new American Red Cross could respond to crises other than war such as earthquakes, forest fires, and hurricanes.

Barton became President of the American branch of the society, which held its first official meeting on May 21, 1881.

The society's role changed with the advent of the Spanish-American War during which it aided refugees and prisoners of the civil war. Domestically in 1884 she helped in the floods on the Ohio River, provided Texas with food and supplies





during the famine of 1887 and took workers to Illinois in 1888 after a tornado and that same year to Florida for the yellow fever epidemic. Within days after the Johnstown flood in 1889, she led a delegation of 50 doctors and nurses in response. In 1897, responding to the humanitarian crisis in the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of the Hamidian Massacres, Barton sailed to Constantinople and after long negotiations with Abdul Hamid II, opened the first American International Red Cross headquarters in the heart of Turkey. Barton herself traveled along with five other Red Cross expeditions to the Armenian provinces in the spring of 1896, providing relief and humanitarian aid. Barton also worked in hospitals in Cuba in 1898 at the age of seventy-seven. Barton's last field operation was helping victims of the Galveston hurricane in 1900. The operation established an orphanage for children. Barton resigned as president of the Red Cross in 1904.

On April 12, 1912 at the age of 90 she died in Glen Echo.



Dr. Emily Blackwell

DR. EMILY BLACKWELL

Emily Blackwell was the second woman to earn a medical degree at what is now Case Western Reserve University, and the third openly identified woman to earn a medical degree in the United States.

Blackwell was born on October 8, 1826 in Bristol, England. In 1832 the family immigrated to the US. They first settled in New York but financial difficulties caused them to move to Cincinnati, Ohio in 1837. Their intent was to re-establish their family business, but their father died three weeks after the move.

Inspired by the example of her older sister, Elizabeth, she studied medicine, earning her degree in 1854. In 1857 the Blackwell sisters and Marie Zakrzewska established the New York Infirmary for Indigent Women and Children. From the beginning Emily took responsibility for management of the infirmary and in large part for the raising of funds. For the next forty years she managed the infirmary, overseeing surgery, nursing, and bookkeeping.

Blackwell traveled to Albany to convince the legislature to provide the hospital with funds that would ensure long-term financial stability. She transformed an institution housed in a rented, sixteen-room house into a full fledged hospital. By 1874 the infirmary served over 7,000 patients annually.

During the American Civil War Blackwell helped organize the Women's Central Association of Relief, which selected and trained nurses for service in the war. Emily and Elizabeth Blackwell and Mary Livermore also played an important role in the development of the United States Sanitary Commission.

After the war, in 1868 the Blackwell sisters established the Women's Medical College in New York City. Emily became professor of obstetrics and, in 1869, when Elizabeth moved to London to help form the London School of Medicine for Women, became dean of the college. In 1876 it became a three-year institution, and in 1893 it became a four-year college, ahead of much of the profession. By 1899 the college had trained 364 women doctors.

From 1883, Blackwell lived with her partner Elizabeth Cushier, who also served as a doctor at the infirmary. Blackwell and Cushier retired at the turn of the century. After traveling abroad for a year and a half, they spent the next winters at their home in Montclair, New Jersey and summers in Maine.

Blackwell died on September 7, 1910 in York Cliffs, Maine, a few months after her sister Elizabeth's death in England.

Blackwell was denied admission to study medicine at the Geneva Medical College in Geneva, New York, from which her older sister had graduated. After being rejected by several other schools, she was finally accepted in 1852 by Rush Medical College in Chicago. However, in 1853, when male students complained about having to study with a woman, the Illinois Medical Society vetoed her admission. She was accepted by the Western Reserve University (now Case Western Reserve University) in Cleveland, Ohio, and earned her M.D. degree in



1854. She subsequently pursued further studies in Edinburgh under Sir James Young Simpson, in London under Dr. William Jenner, and in Paris, Berlin, and Dresden.

The Western Reserve University, at the urging of Dean John Delamater, began the medical education of women. The Ohio Female Medical Education Society backed his efforts and decision. The Society was formed in 1852 to provide moral and financial support for the women medical students. Despite their efforts, the Western Reserve faculty voted to put an end to Delamater's policies in 1856, finding it "inexpedient" to continue admitting women. The American Medical Association also adopted a report in 1856 advising against coeducation in medicine.

Western Reserve resumed admitting women in 1879, but did so only sporadically for five years. Admission of women at Western Reserve recommenced on a continuous basis in 1918.

Saint Bridget of Sweden

BRIDGET OF SWEDEN

Birgitta of Vadstena was born in 1303 the daughter of the knight Birger Persson of the family of Finsta, governor and lawspeaker of Uppland, and one of the richest landowners of the country, and his wife, a member of the so-called Lawspeaker branch of the Folkunga family. Through her mother, Ingeborg, Birgitta was related to the Swedish kings of her era.

In 1316, at the age of 14 she married Ulf Gudmarsson of the family of Ulvåsa, Lord of Närke, to whom she bore eight children, four daughters and four sons. Six survived infancy, which was rare at that time. One daughter is now honored as St. Catherine of Sweden. Bridget became known for her works of charity, particularly toward Östergötland's unwed mothers and their children. When she was in her early thirties, she was summoned to be lady-in-waiting to the new Queen of Sweden, Blanche of Namur. In 1341 she and her husband went on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

In 1344, shortly after their return, Ulf died. After this loss, Birgitta became a member of the Third Order of St. Francis and devoted herself wholly to a life of prayer and caring for the poor and the sick.

It was about this time that she developed the idea of establishing the religious community, which was to become the Order of the Most Holy Saviour, or the Brigittines.

In 1350, a year of jubilee, Bridget braved a plague-stricken Europe to make a pilgrimage to Rome accompanied by her daughter, Catherine, and a small party of priests and disciples. This was done partly to obtain from the Pope the authorization of the new Order and partly in pursuance of her self-imposed mission to elevate the moral tone of the age.

It was not until 1370 that Pope Urban V, during his brief attempt to re-establish the papacy in Rome, confirmed the Rule of the Order, but meanwhile Birgitta had made herself universally beloved in Rome by her kindness and good works. Other than occasional pilgrimages, including one to Jerusalem in 1373, she remained in Rome until her death on 23 July 1373. Although she never returned to Sweden, her years in Rome were far from happy, being hounded by debts and by opposition to her work against Church abuses. She was originally buried at San Lorenzo in Panisperna before her remains were returned to Sweden. She was canonized in the year 1391 by Pope Boniface IX, which was confirmed by the Council of Constance in 1415. Because of new discussions about her works, the Council of Basel confirmed the orthodoxy of the revelations in 1436.

As a child, she had already believed herself to have visions; these now became more frequent, and her records of these *Revelationes coelestes*



(*Celestial revelations*) which were translated into Latin by Matthias, canon of Linköping, and by her confessor, Peter, prior of Alvastra, obtained a great vogue during the Middle Ages. These revelations made Bridget a celebrity to some and a controversial figure to others.

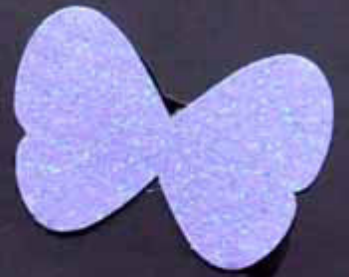
Bridget of Sweden, was a mystic and saint, and founder of the Brigittines nuns and monks after the death of her husband of twenty years. She was also the mother of Catherine of Vadstena.

Jacoba Felicie

JACOBE FELICIE

Jacobe Felicie was a fourteenth century woman whose birth and death dates are unknown. Little is known as well of her parentage or early life history.

She was more commonly called Jacoba. She was a Parisian physician, successful despite a lack of formal training. She was summoned to court in 1322 on the charge of practicing medicine without a license. At trial, testimony was offered by her affluent clientele, that she had indeed cured them where other male physicians had failed. Competence, however, was not the legal issue. Felicie was convicted and banned from the medical profession. Her case is one of many in the fourteenth century through which male, university-trained physicians eventually gained a monopoly over the non-obstetrical treatment of upper-class urban women.



Mary Breckinridge

Mary Carson Breckinridge

Mary Carson Breckinridge was born on February 17, 1881, in Memphis, Tennessee into a prominent family. Breckinridge was a daughter of Arkansas Congressman Clifton Rodes Breckinridge and a granddaughter of John C. Breckinridge. Private tutors in Washington, DC and in St. Petersburg, Russia educated her.

In 1894, Breckinridge and her family moved to Russia when President Grover Cleveland appointed her father to serve as the U.S. minister to that country. They returned to the United States in 1897.

Breckinridge's mother disapproved of her cousin Sophonisba Breckinridge's attending college and starting a career. She helped ensure her daughter followed a more traditional path.

Breckinridge was married in 1904 to a lawyer, Henry Ruffner Morrison, of Hot Springs, Arkansas. He died only two years later; the couple had no children. Following his death, Breckinridge entered a nursing class at New York City's St. Luke's Hospital. She remained there three years, taking a degree in nursing in 1910 before returning to the South. In 1912 she married Richard Ryan Thompson, the president of a college in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. The couple had two children. Their daughter, Polly, was born prematurely in 1916 and died when only six hours old. Their four-year-old son, Clifford, died suddenly two years later from appendicitis.

Breckinridge's husband was unfaithful and they were divorced in 1920.

Breckinridge turned to nursing to overcome her grief. She joined the American Committee for Devastated France. While in Europe she met French and British nurse-midwives and realized that midwives could meet the healthcare needs of rural American mothers and babies. A deeply religious woman, Breckinridge considered this path to be her life's calling.

No midwifery course were offered in the United States, so Breckinridge returned to England and enrolled at the British Hospital for Mothers and Babies and became certified by The Central Midwives Board.

She returned to the United States in 1925 and founded the Kentucky Committee for Mothers and Babies that became the Frontier Nursing Service.

Breckinridge had a large log house, called the Big House, which was built in Wendover, Kentucky to serve as her home and the Frontier Nursing Service headquarters.

In 1939 she started her own midwifery school. There, Breckinridge conducted Sunday afternoon services using the Episcopal prayer book. In 1952 she completed her memoir "Wide Neighborhoods" which is still available from the University of Kentucky Press.

She continued to lead the Frontier Nursing Service until her death on May 16, 1965 at Wendover.



Dr. Adina Blady Szwajger

Dr. ADINA BLADY SZWAJGER

Adina Blady Szwajger, was born March 17, 1917 to Icchak Blady Szwajger and Stefania Hertzberg Szwajger in Warsaw, Poland.

In 1933, she entered Medical School at the University of Warsaw. On July 27, 1939, she married law student, Stephan Szpigielman. They honeymoon for ten days. Then Adina returned to Warsaw and August 30, 1939 and the Germans invaded Poland on September 1, 1939.

On September 4, 1939, classes at the university were terminated as credited. On October 11, Adina went to Lvov in the Soviet zone where she met up with Stephan hoping to complete her studies.

The Germans continued to contain the Jews throughout the fall, and in December 1939, she learned she was on a list for deportation to the Gulag. She returned to Warsaw and after five days of captivity by the Soviets.

On March 11, 1940 Edina started work in the Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital on Sliska Street on the TB ward. In June 1941 she contracted typhus while visiting a displaced person's camp and was seriously ill until August.

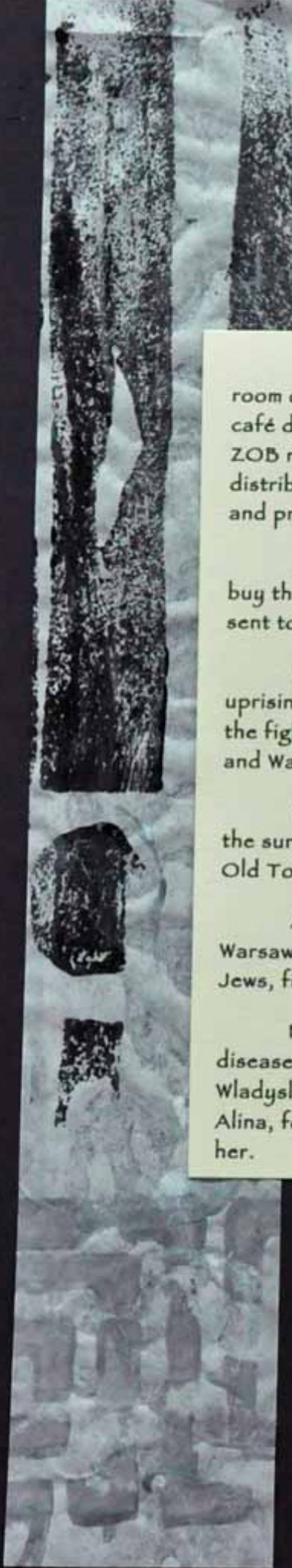
In September she began work in Children's Hospital on Leszno Street. Conditions in the hospital were very difficult. There were starving children whom the staff couldn't scavenge enough food to keep them alive. The staff had to practice medicine where it meant saving a child one day only to condemn him to a different kind of death the next. Typhus and scarlet fever ran rampant through the hospitals. The staff could do nothing to help the patients. Soon the Nazis begin deporting the Jews on cattle cars to their deaths. At great cost to herself, Adina gave lethal injections of morphine to the elderly who could not move themselves and to babies near death as the Nazis arrived to clear out the hospital.

In July of 1941, Adina's mother, along with many other teachers, was deported to the Treblinka death camp. Many staff at the Children's Hospital broke down as the deportations continued. Adina was among them and attempted to commit suicide, but was saved by Dr. Hela Keilson. Adina has been quoted as saying the work and conditions at the hospitals weighed on her for the rest of her life.

Finally, the Children's Hospital was closed down. In October, 1943, Adina was given a "life ticket" and with other colleagues from the Hospital began work in a makeshift hospital on Gesia Street.

The Nazis closed this Hospital in January of 1943. Adina and thirty others concealed themselves on the second floor of the building and survived.





On January 25, 1943 Adina left the ghetto with false papers to live in a room on Dzielna Street. Following a raid on the Council for the Aid to Jews (ZOB) café during the Ghetto uprising, it was burned down. Adina went to work for the ZOB right up until the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. She worked as a courier distributing large sums of money to those in hiding, arranging false documents, and providing medical care when she could.

Stefan, worn down by months of living in hiding, became convinced he could buy their way into Switzerland. It was a trap, and he, along with many others was sent to Auschwitz. Adina narrowly escaped.

Adina continued to work for the resistance and remain in hiding. A final uprising was planned for October 2, 1944. Adina was determined to participate. In the fighting 150,000 to 200,00 civilians and some 10,000 soldiers lost their lives and Warsaw was razed to the ground.

Wik Slawski (Wladyslaw Wsidowski, later Adina's second husband) helped the survivors of the Hospital set up an escape route through the sewers from the Old Town to the center of Warsaw.

Adina and Wik did escape. On January 17, 1945 the Soviet Army liberated Warsaw. On January 25th, 1945 Adina began work for the Main Committee of Polish Jews, finding Jewish children placed with Aryan families during the war.

Following the war, she began her work as a pediatrician specializing in chest diseases. She died February 18, 1993 in Lodz, Poland. Dr. Szwajger later married Wladyslaw Swidowski, who died several years ago. Two daughters, Hanna and Alina, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, all in Poland and survive her.



Rev. Dr. Anna
Howard Shaw

REV. DR. ANNA HOWARD SHAW

Ann Howard Shaw was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England February 14, 1847. At the age of four, she and her family immigrated to the United States and settled in Lawrence, Massachusetts. When Shaw was twelve, her father took up a claim of three hundred and sixty acres of land in the wilderness of northern Michigan and sent her mother and five young children to live there alone.

Her mother had envisioned their Michigan home to be an English farm with deep meadows, sunny skies and daisies, but was devastated to discover it was a log cabin 40 miles from a post office and 100 miles from a railroad. Shaw became very active during this period; supporting her mother in her time of shock and despair, refurbishing the cabin, digging a well, chopping wood for the big fireplace and felling trees.

Seeing her mother's emotional suffering, Shaw blamed her father for the hardships they had to endure, while he free to dedicate time to the Abolition cause.

The family's misfortunes grew worse. During the Civil War, her sister Eleanor died giving birth, and her brother Tom was wounded. When Shaw was fifteen, she became a schoolteacher and, after her older brothers and father joined the war effort, she used her earnings to help support the family.

Yet with every month of the families' effort the gulf between their income and their expenses grew wider.

As Shaw matured, her drive to attend college became firmer. After the Civil War, she abandoned her teaching job and moved in with her married sister Mary. While she would have preferred the more lucrative work of digging ditches, she was forced to pick up the "dreaded needle," and become a seamstress.

Reverend Marianna Thompson was the first person to support her pursuit of an education and inspired her to begin a preaching career. Thanks to Thompson's help, Shaw entered Big Rapids High School where the preceptor recognized Shaw's talents and drive. At the age of twenty-four, Shaw was invited by Dr. Peck, a man looking to ordain a woman in the Methodist ministry, to give her first sermon. With encouragement from Lucy Foot, Dr. Peck, and her close friend, Clara Osborn, Shaw agreed and gave her first sermon in Ashton, Michigan.

Despite the success of her first sermon, her newfound passion to preach received disapproval from her classmates, friends, and family who agreed to pay for her college education only if she abandoned preaching. Despite such opposition, Anna chose to keep on preaching. She was deeply moved by Mary A. Livermore, a prominent lecturer who came to Big Rapids. Ms. Livermore gave her the following advice: "if you want to preach, go on and preach...No matter what people say, don't let them stop you!"

In 1873, Shaw entered Albion College, a Methodist school in Albion, Michigan. Since her family frowned upon her decided career path, they refused to



provide any financial support. At that point, Shaw had been a licensed preacher for three years and earned her wages by giving lectures on temperance.

After Albion College, Shaw attended Boston University School of Theology in 1876. She was the only woman in her class of forty-two men, and did not feel welcome. Male licensed preachers were given free lodging in the dormitory. Shaw had to pay for outside lodging. Additionally, unlike Albion, she had far more competition to obtain preaching jobs. As she lost money to pay the rent, she struggled to feed herself. Now Shaw questioned her decision to be a minister.

In 1880, after she and Annie Oliver were refused ordination by the Methodist Episcopal Church, she achieved ordination in the Methodist Protestant Church.

After her ordination, Shaw received an M.D. from Boston University in 1886. During her time in medical school, Shaw became an outspoken advocate of political rights for women.

Beginning in 1886, Shaw served as the chair of the Franchise Department of Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Her task was "to work for woman suffrage and then to use the ballot to gain 'home protection' and temperance legislation." However her focus on temperance subsided as she became more heavily involved in the suffrage movement.

In 1888, Shaw attended the first meeting of the International Council of Women. Susan B. Anthony encouraged her to join the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). Having agreed, Shaw played a key role with the two suffrage associations merging when she helped to persuade the AWSA to merge with Anthony and Stanton's NWSA, creating for the first time in two decades a semblance of organizational unity within the suffrage movement.

Beginning in 1904 and for the next eleven years, Shaw was the president of NAWSA. Under her leadership, NAWSA continued to lobby for a national constitutional amendment granting women the right to vote.

During the early 20th century, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, NAWSA members, began employing militant techniques to fight for women's suffrage. As president of NAWSA, Shaw was pressured to support these tactics. Nevertheless, Shaw maintained she was "unalterably opposed to militancy, believing nothing of permanent value has ever been secured by it that could not have been more easily obtained by peaceful methods."

During World War I, Shaw was head of the Women's Committee of the United States Council of National Defense, for which she became the first woman to earn the Distinguished Service Medal.

She continued to lecture for the suffrage cause for the remaining years of her life. Shaw died July 2, 1919, only a few months before Congress ratified the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution.



Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell

Dr. ELIZABETH BLACKWELL

Elizabeth Blackwell was born on February 3, 1821 Gloucestershire, England, to Samuel Blackwell, a sugar refiner and his wife Hannah (Lane) Blackwell. She had two older siblings, and would eventually have six younger siblings.

Samuel Blackwell was somewhat liberal in his attitudes and believed that each child should be given the opportunity for unlimited development of his/her talents and gifts.

In 1830 Samuel moved his family to America. In New York her father set up the Congress Sugar Refinery. He also became active in reform circles. The Blackwells, rather ironically, gave up sugar in protest of the slave trade.

In 1836, the refinery was burned down and a year later ran into business problems. The family economized, dismissed their servants, and moved to Cincinnati, Ohio in an attempt to re-establish the business. Three weeks after their move Samuel Blackwell died unexpectedly.

Pressed by financial need, the sisters Anna, Marian and Elizabeth started a school, *The Cincinnati English and French Academy for Young Ladies*, which charged for tuition, room and board.

In 1839 William Henry Channing, a charismatic Unitarian minister arrived in Cincinnati. Blackwell started attending the Unitarian Church and a conservative backlash from the community ensued. The Academy lost many pupils and was abandoned in 1842. Blackwell began teaching private pupils.

In 1844, Blackwell procured a teaching job that paid \$400 per year in Henderson, Kentucky. Although pleased with the new job, she was deeply disturbed by her encounter with the realities of slavery. She found Henderson to be intolerable and returned to Cincinnati.

Blackwell was inspired to pursue medicine by a friend in Cincinnati dying of a painful disease. This friend believed a female physician would have provided more compassionate care. Another influence on Blackwell was the connotation of "female physician" at the time. Abortionists were known as "female physicians", a name Blackwell found degrading to what a female physician could potentially achieve.

In 1845, Blackwell resolved she would one day obtain a medical degree, but she didn't know where, or how she would pay for it.

Blackwell procured a job teaching music at an academy in Asheville, North Carolina, with the goal of saving up money for medical school expenses. In Asheville Blackwell lodged with Reverend John Dickson, who had been a physician before he became a clergyman. Dickson allowed her to use the medical books in



his library to study.

However, her job ended when the school closed and Blackwell left Charleston for Philadelphia to pursue her medical study. Blackwell boarded with Dr. William Elder, and studied anatomy privately with Dr. Jonathan M. Allen as she attempted to get her foot in the door at any medical school in Philadelphia. She was met with resistance everywhere.

In October 1847, Blackwell was accepted as a medical student by Geneva Medical College located in upstate New York. The dean and faculty, responsible for evaluating an applicant were not able to make a decision. They put the issue up to vote by the 150 male students of the class with the stipulation that if one student objected, Blackwell would be turned away. The young men thought this request was a joke, and respond accordingly. They voted unanimously to accept her.

When Blackwell arrived at the college everything was unnerving but her presence turned a group of boisterous young men into well-behaved gentlemen.

Blackwell received encouragement from both professors and students. However, she experienced a lot of isolation as well. In the summer between her two terms at Geneva, she returned to Philadelphia, stayed with Dr. Elder, and applied for medical positions in the area. The Guardians of the Poor, the city commission that ran Blockley Almshouse, granted her permission to work there. Blackwell slowly gained acceptance, although some young resident physicians still would walk out and refuse to assist her in diagnosing and treating her patients. During her time there, Blackwell was appalled by the syphilitic ward and by those afflicted with typhus. Her graduating thesis at Geneva Medical College ended up being on the topic of typhus.

On 23 January 1849, Elizabeth Blackwell became the first woman to achieve a medical degree in the United States.

In April 1849, Blackwell decided to continue her studies in Europe. She headed to Paris where she was able to enroll at La Maternité; a 'lying-in' hospital, under the condition that she would be treated as a student midwife, not a physician. She gained much experience there and by the end of the year, Paul Dubois, the foremost obstetrician of his day, voiced his opinion she would make the best obstetrician in the United States, male or female.

On 4 November 1849, when Blackwell was treating an infant with ophthalmia neonatorum, she spurted some contaminated solution into her own eye accidentally, and contracted the infection. She lost sight in her left eye and thus lost all hope of becoming a surgeon. After a period of recovery, she enrolled at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London in 1850.



In 1851, Blackwell decided to return to the United States to establish her own practice. Blackwell had very few patients, a fact she attributed to the stigma of woman doctors as abortionists. In 1852, she began delivering lectures and published *The Laws of Life with Special Reference to the Physical Education of Girls*, her first work, a volume about the physical and mental development of girls.

In 1853, Blackwell established a small dispensary near Tompkins Square. In 1857, Dr. Marie Zakrzewska, along with Blackwell and her sister Emily, who had also obtained a medical degree, expanded Blackwell's original dispensary into the New York Infirmary for Indigent Women and Children. The patient load doubled in the second year. Blackwell made several trips back to Britain to raise funds. In 1858, under a clause in the Medical Act 1858 that recognized doctors with foreign degrees practicing in Britain before 1858, she was able to become the first woman to have her name entered on the General Medical Council's medical register. By 1866, nearly 7,000 patients were being treated per year at the New York Infirmary. Blackwell was needed back in the United States. At this point, a rift occurred between Emily and Elizabeth Blackwell over the management of the infirmary and medical college. Elizabeth left for Britain to try to establish medical education for women there.

In 1874, Blackwell established a women's medical school in London with Sophia Jex-Blake, who had been a student at the New York Infirmary years earlier. Blackwell had serious doubts about Jex-Blake. Nonetheless, Blackwell became deeply involved with the school, and it opened in 1874 as the London School of Medicine for Women, with the primary goal of preparing women for the licensing exam of Apothecaries Hall.

After the establishment of the school, Blackwell lost much of her authority to Jex-Blake. She resigned in 1877, officially retiring from her medical career.

In 1869, Blackwell diversified her interests, and was active both in social reform and authorship. She co-founded the National Health Society in 1871. She perceived herself as a wealthy gentlewoman who had the leisure to dabble in reform and in intellectual activities. Blackwell had a lofty, and ultimately unattainable goal: evangelical moral perfection. She believed that the Christian morality ought to play as large a role as scientific inquiry in medicine. She did not believe in germ theory. Instead, she believed that disease came from moral impurity, not from microbes.

Blackwell, in her later years, was still relatively active. In 1895, she published her autobiography, *Pioneer Work in Opening the Medical Profession to Women*.

In 1907, Blackwell fell down a flight of stairs, and was left almost completely disabled. On May 31, 1910 Blackwell died at her home in Hastings, Sussex.



By Marcia Fountain-Blacklidge