

BLACK WOMEN PHYSICIANS

Accession number	<u>49</u>
Collection size	<u>5"</u>
Inclusive dates	<u>1902-1979 (open)</u>

Preliminary Register

mjj '79

INTRODUCTION

The material represented in this collection is scant, probably due to a number of factors: (1) primarily, relatively few black women chose to enter (or had the choice of entering) the white, male-dominated medical profession. Material on the black women who did become physicians would be limited then, to begin with; (2) published material about black women physicians is extremely difficult to find. While women physicians in general have been written about to some extent, it is unclear whether the statements made about them and the statistics cited represent the total woman-physician population or, through oversight and unconscious racial attitudes, represent facts about only white women physicians; and (3) manuscript material for the black women who did become physicians is also scarce. The Medical College of Pennsylvania Collections reveals only a few letters to and from the black alumnae, statistics collected by a diligent and concerned former librarian, and a few photographs of black women students at the College.

In preparation for an article, Archives staff collected published material on black women physicians and compiled the data into an unpublished manuscript which is part of the present collection. In 1979 a biographical article was written on a few of the early black women physicians who had attended the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. This article, which appeared in the Spring 1979 issue of the Alumnae News, is also part of this collection.

The collection is open and material on black women physicians will be added as it becomes available.

ACCESS

The materials are open for use by researchers in the Archives and Special Collections on Women in Medicine. Limited photocopying for research purposes is available.

HISTORY

The first black American woman physician was Rebecca Lee who graduated in 1864 from the New England Female Medical College, Boston. The second black American woman physician was Rebecca Cole, an 1867 graduate of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. The third was Susan Smith McKinney, an 1870 graduate of the New York Medical College for Women. In the time period 1867-1970 the Woman's Medical College graduated approximately 40 black women. This is just a small percentage of the total number of women graduates for this time period. The percentage figures of active black women physicians within the entire physician population of the United States is also very minute. The percentage of black women physicians was less than 1 percent in the early 1900's and that percentage had not changed significantly through 1972.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains correspondence between the former librarian and black alumnae of the Woman's Medical College; lists of black women graduates of the College which were periodically updated; and a few reprints. Also part of the collection is an unpublished manuscript of an article on black women physicians, prepared by Archives staff in 1977/78 (collateral materials are included), and a manuscript of an article by Margaret Jerrido which appeared in the Spring 1979 issue of the Alumnae News.

SERIES

Correspondence

February 18, 1906 - May 1964

Woman's Medical College - alumnae lists (5) 1948-1962

Reprints

1902-1952

Article

Draft (with collateral material) 8 pages

Manuscript and copy of article which appeared in the Spring 1979 Alumnae News