Daniel Hale Williams, Surgeon, Educator & Medical Advocate

Hospital for Colored People
Auspicious Beginning of the Provident Hospital

White people have been trying to wipe out the color line for years, but it has come to be the privilege of the colored folks of Chicago to make the opening attack on race discrimination. The first patient of the new Provident Hospital will be an Irishman …

Dr. Daniel Hale Williams … conceived the idea of starting a hospital for [African-Americans] several years ago. It was originally intended exclusively for [African-Americans], but out of the idea has grown the Provident Hospital, which has taken down the barriers and will admit every one who has a claim to the attention of a physician …

To heal the sick and comfort the afflicted had been the great objects of the lives of noble men in all times and the [African-Americans] of Chicago were to be commended for joining, independent of older organizations, the crusade against the terrors of sickness …

The hospital has a small beginning, but it is well backed with money and professional skill, and its founders say they hope to make it one of the foremost among institutions … in Chicago.

Daniel Hale Williams Timeline*

1858 Born January 18 in Hollidaysburgh, Pennsylvania, son of Daniel and Sarah (Price) Williams
1870 Removed to Janesville, Wisconsin, after his Father’s death
1870-1873 Education in the Janesville public schools
1874-1877 Hare’s Classical Academy, Janesville, studied Latin, biology, physics, logic, German and French
1878-1880 Studied medicine under Henry Palmer, MD, Janesville, Wisconsin
1881 Entered Chicago Medical College (Northwestern University Medical School)
1883 Awarded MD from Northwestern University Medical School; licensed in Illinois; established private practice in Chicago, Illinois
1885-1888 Demonstrator in anatomy, Northwestern University Medical School
1887-1891 Member of Illinois State Board of Health; Attending physician, Protestant Orphan Asylum
1888-1891 Instructor at the South Side Dispensary (clinic of Northwestern University Medical School)
1891 A founder of Provident Hospital; established Training School for Nurses at Provident; attending surgeon at Provident
1892 Provided “Certificate of Character” for Emma Reynolds’ admission to Northwestern University Woman’s Medical School—first black woman awarded an MD at Northwestern University, 1895; she was also a graduate of the Training School for Nurses at Provident Hospital
1893 Performed successful operation of the pericardium, July 10
1893-1898 Surgeon in chief, Freedman’s Hospital, Washington, D.C.
1895 A founder of the National Medical Association
1898 Marriage to Alice Johnson, a school teacher; returned to Chicago; Surgeon at Provident Hospital
1900 Surgical clinics at Meharry Medical College, Nashville, Tenn.; professor of clinical surgery
1903-1909 Surgical staff at Cook County Hospital, Chicago, Illinois
1909-1926 Surgical staff at St. Luke’s Hospital, Chicago, Illinois
1909 LLD (hon.) Wilberforce University
1913 Nominated Fellow of the American College of Surgeons
1925 MS (hon.) Howard University
1926 Retired after suffering a stroke.
1931 Dr. Williams died, Idlewild, Michigan, August 4; burial in Graceland Cemetery, Chicago

*Some date sources are contradictory

Sources:
- Chicago Medical College (Northwestern University Medical School). Annual announcements, 1881-1897.
- Students of the Woman’s Medical College record of attendance and scholarship. 1870-1896.