

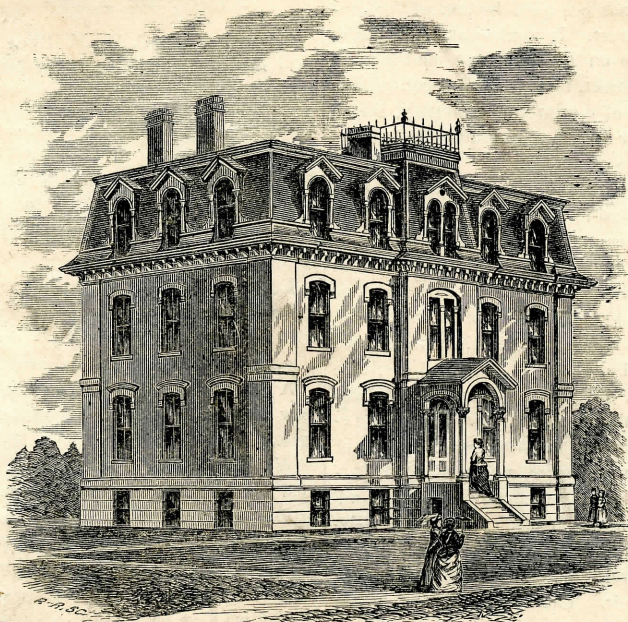
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# New England Female Medical College. Laying of the corner-stone, Boston, June 9, 1870

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*Boston University*



*View of College Building.*

## NEW ENGLAND FEMALE MEDICAL COLLEGE.

*Laying of the Corner-Stone, Boston, June 9, 1870.*

The corner-stone of the new College Building, (of which the above is the design,) now in process of erection on East Concord Street, opposite the City Hospital, was formally laid on the 9th inst. The exercises began with a brief address by Joshua Merrill, President of the College; and prayer was offered by Rev. E. B. Webb, D.D.

The ceremony of laying the corner-stone then took place. Within the stone was deposited a copper box, securely sealed, inclosing the following contents:

A complete file of the Annual Reports of the College, from 1848 to 1869. Publications of the Secretary, Dr. Gregory: **LETTER TO LADIES** in favor of Female Physicians, (1850); **HISTORICAL SKETCH** of the College, (1860); **FEMALE PHYSICIANS**, (1862); "**DOCTOR**" or "**DOCTRESS**"? (1868). Circulars; Programme of Ceremonies of Laying Corner-Stone. Copies of Boston daily papers: Advertiser, Post, Journal, Traveller, Transcript, Herald, News, Times; Weeklies: Congregationalist, Christian Register, Universalist, Christian Witness, Christian Era, Watchman and Reflector, Zion's Herald, Commonwealth.

As the heavy block of granite was slowly lowered into its place, the President, with his right hand resting upon it, said:

"IN THE NAME OF GOD, FROM WHOM THE GIFT OF LIFE AND HEALTH AND HEALING COMES—IN FURTHERANCE OF THE OBJECTS OF THE NEW ENGLAND FEMALE MEDICAL COLLEGE, AND IN BEHALF OF ITS OFFICERS AND FRIENDS—I LAY THIS CORNER-STONE. AND MAY THE BLESSING OF HEAVEN CROWN THE WORK."

### *Historical Statement.*

When the stone had been laid, Dr. Samuel Gregory, the Secretary of the College, made the following historical statement:—

In 1847, there began in this city a little movement in favor of introducing women into the medical profession. Many regarded it as an absurd and ephemeral affair, worthy only of contempt and ridicule. But the movement had a purpose, and accordingly measures were immediately adopted to carry the idea into effect. A few brave women were found who were desirous to be instructed; two medical gentlemen, in good and regular standing in the profession, were engaged to instruct them; and, on the first Wednesday in November, 1848, a class of twelve members—a good apostolic number—commenced receiving a course of lectures. This was the beginning of the New England Female Medical College, which has continued in uninterrupted operation to the present time, and is the first institution of the kind in the world. Seventy-nine women have been through the three-years' course and received medical degrees from the College; while over two hundred others have attended a partial course, much to their own advantage and that of the circles in which they move.

The institution began without pecuniary means or educational facilities, not having so much as a skeleton to illustrate the lectures. After a while it borrowed a well-worn manikin of Dr. Calvin Cutter, the author of school books on physiology. But it has been sustained, and now has a respectable foundation in real



and personal estate. It owns the lot on which we are, being a square of nearly an acre, and has permanent productive funds to the amount of thirty thousand dollars.

The first lectures were delivered in a parlor of a private house on Franklin street. The school was soon invited to a house occupied by one of the students, on Hanover street. It next went, on a similar invitation, to a house on Barton street, and then to one on Washington street, near Central court. Thus for two years it was of a migratory character, like a country school-master boarding round in the families of his scholars.

In 1850, the excellent and eminent Dr. Winslow Lewis being about to go to Europe, to spend a couple of years, the managers of the institution hired his house, at the foot of the Common, on the corner of Boylston and Pleasant streets. This was regarded as an advantageous arrangement. Dr. Lewis was friendly to the project, and admitting the school to his own private residence, and allowing it the use of his large and valuable library, gave it sort of an endorsement—a matter of no small moment in that struggling period of infancy. This fact was duly set forth in the Annual Reports, the newspapers, and by all other convenient methods. The house, moreover, had the advantage of being in a very conspicuous place. Everybody who went round the Common, or passed through Boylston street, or went to the Providence depot, was sure to see it. That circumstance, too, was duly availed of, by putting up a sign, sixteen feet long and one foot wide, on the end of the house fronting the Common, so that literally he that ran could read, though in pursuit of the moving cars. It cost the Doctor something when he got home; for, as he told me, he had a great talking to for having let his house for such a purpose. Haven't they spoiled your library? inquired an anxious medical brother. No, said the Doctor; they have taken better care of it than I should if I had been at home. Others were so generous as to be willing to paint his house gratis, for the sake of obliterating the traces of the obnoxious sign!

[We may now good naturedly allude to early prejudices, that a score of years have softened or extinguished.]

After the sojourn at the foot of the Common, the College took rooms up two flights of stairs at No. 274 Washington street. There it abode till 1859, when it took a longer journey than ever before, to the building on Springfield street, now occupied as the Home for Aged Men. Here it tarried three years and a half, and moved to its present quarters, at No. 21 East Canton street, in December, 1862. In October, 1870, God willing, it will move into the building, the corner-stone of which we have now laid.

This will be the first building ever erected for such an institution; and, as Boston was the first to start a medical college for women, it is very natural and proper that it should be the first to erect a building expressly for such a purpose. And we have not a particle of doubt that the good people of our city, our State, and New England, will promptly furnish the remaining funds required to pay for a building consecrated to so noble and philanthropic a work.

And now, friends, if you will pardon a personal allusion, I will close by remarking that, having accompanied the institution in all of its wanderings and sojournings, having known and felt the disadvantages and discomforts of its unsuitable accommodations, and

(fearful to remember!) having perpetually had an anxious looking for rent day, often knowing not whence the means to meet it were coming, you will believe me when I say—I rejoice and thank God for the laying of that corner-stone.

### *Professor Aiken's Address.*

Edward Aiken, A.M., M.D., one of the Professors, then delivered the following address in behalf of the Faculty:

So intimate is the relation of the Faculty to the College, that of all others we certainly must regard this occasion,—the laying of the corner-stone of a building erected expressly for the Institution, and to be devoted solely to its benevolent purposes,—with the deepest interest.

I cannot, therefore, better improve the few moments assigned me through the partiality of my colleagues, than by mentioning *some of the reasons why we as Instructors hail this event with pleasure.*

A general statement of them would be, that here and now *we begin to realize our cherished hopes* for the College.

We have all of us, for periods varying from one year to fifteen years in length, been making the best of the accommodations afforded us, regarding them, all the while, as temporary and probationary. We have never rested in or been satisfied with them. *Excelsior* has been our watch-word; and now, at length, we have begun to climb the height whence we shall in due time look out upon an unobstructed horizon!

But to be more explicit: We rejoice in this occasion *as affording us the prospect of greater facilities in our several departments of instruction.*

Through the favor of Providence, the liberality of friends and our own efforts, we have already secured much valuable illustrative apparatus in certain departments, while in others we are still deficient. We doubt not that the permanence given to our Institution by the erection of this building will place us in a condition to supply our needs.

And, especially, located as we are, at the very doors of a great public charity—knocking perpetually at its gate—we are confident that we shall be able to obtain valuable aid from its female wards for the departments of clinical medicine and surgery, medical chemistry and morbid anatomy.

Again, we rejoice in this occasion *as the harbinger of greater inducements to the most valuable class of students.*

It is well understood that the expense of living in our cities is very great, and it is also a fact, if not so well understood, that our most valuable students come from a class with limited means, though rich in energy, purpose, will, in great thoughts and noble aspirations—ready to help themselves, but needing a field within the possibilities of their at best moderate circumstances.

With the rooms and boarding conveniences to be afforded by our building, as well as the numerous openings for employment as nurses and hospital assistants which will undoubtedly present themselves, this class will be attracted to our halls, and our opportunities for usefulness be thus largely multiplied.

This leads me to remark, finally, that we, as Instructors, are chiefly interested in this occasion *as an era in the progress of the benevolent reform which we have espoused—Female Medical Education.*







PLAN OF THE GROUNDS.

