Alexander Thomas Augusta Encyclopedia Article

Alexander Thomas Augusta

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1825-1890

American physician who was the first black surgeon in the U.S. Army. Born a freedman in Norfolk, Virginia, Augusta studied under private tutors and, in 1856, earned a medical degree from Trinity Medical College in Toronto. During the American Civil War, Augusta was appointed surgeon of colored volunteers with the rank of major. He later became the first black person to head a major hospital and formed the nucleus of the new medical school at Howard University. Augusta remained on the faculty until 1877, when he returned to private practice in Washington, DC. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.