Rebecca Lee Crumpler Encyclopedia Article

Rebecca Lee Crumpler

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Rebecca Lee Crumpler

1833-?

American physician who was the first African American woman to earn a medical degree. She was born in Richmond, Virginia, and raised in Pennsylvania by an aunt who cared for the sick in their community. Inspired by her aunt, Crumpler became a nurse in Massachusetts in 1852. She entered New England Female Medical College in Boston and received her Doctress of Medicine degree on March 1, 1864. Dr. Crumpler practiced medicine in Boston until the end of the Civil War, then moved back to Richmond where she worked with newly freed slaves. Crumpler later returned to Boston and in 1833 wrote a book on the medical care of women and children.