

Born in Bristol, England in 1821, Blackwell moved with her family to the United States at the age of 11. She received several rejections before finally, in October 1847, an acceptance letter arrived from Geneva Medical College in upstate New York. "The idea of winning a doctor's degree gradually assumed the aspect of a great moral struggle, and the moral fight possessed immense attraction for me," she wrote. At first, she was excluded from observing surgical demonstrations. When Samuel died in 1838, several of the Blackwell women became schoolteachers to provide for the family. After the family's finances stabilized, Elizabeth looked for a more interesting line of work. She encouraged Elizabeth to use her brains and energy to become a physician.