**The First African American Female Doctor, Nurse, and Dentist**

**Doctor**: Rebecca Lee Crumpler

Life Span: Delaware born 1831-1895

* No images survive of her, but this coin bears a portrait of her
* Raised by her Aunt who spent much of her time caring for sick neighbors (probably midwife)
* Age 21, 1852 moved to Charlestown, Massachusetts and worked as a nurse- didn’t have to go through formal training because the first school didn’t open until 1873

**Medical School**: New England Female Medical College in 1860

* General Medicine
* Only AA to graduate from the school which closed in 1873
* 1864: First AA woman to earn an MD degree

**1883: “Book of Medical Discourse”** is one of the first publications by an African American (For women and children—similar to midwives)

* There has been little documentation of Dr. Crumpler, but through her publication she has been able to go down in history as the first female AA doctor. The book was based on journal notes she kept during her years practicing medicine.
* Practiced in Boston then moved to Richmond, VA after the Civil War ended in 1865- she felt Richmond would be *"a proper field for real missionary work, and one that would present ample opportunities to become acquainted with the diseases of women and children. During my stay there nearly every hour was improved in that sphere of labor. The last quarter of the year 1866, I was enabled . . . to have access each day to a very large number of the indigent, and others of different classes, in a population of over 30,000 colored."*
* Worked for the Freedmen’s Bureau caring for freed slaves that otherwise wouldn’t have received treatment- victim of intense racism
* By 1880 she was no longer in active practice and had moved back to Massachusetts

Source: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/changingthefaceofmedicine/physicians/biography_73.html>

Nurse**:** Mary Eliza Mahoney

Life Span: May 7, 1845-1926

* Born in Boston, MA.
* Decided to pursue nursing at age 18 and worked at the New England Hospital for Women and Children- accepted to the nursing school in 1878- the first professional nursing program in the country (Ask question: Why was this program important?)
* One of 4 of the 42 to graduate from the program [12 mos. In medical, surgical and maternity ward, lectures by doctors, and 4 months work as private duty nurse]
* After graduating, worked as a private duty nurse- known for quiet efficiency- this professionalism helped raise the status of all nurses
* (Question: what were in home nurses expected to do along with medical duties?) She refused to eat meals with the other in home staff
* Her presence was requested from NJ, D.C., and NC
* One of the first black members of American Nurses Association
  + When they were slow to admit black nurses, she helped to establish the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses and delivered the welcome address in 1909 at first annual convention (see how AAs were involved socially and politically as well)
  + Exposed inequality in nursing education for AAs and pushed to have more admitted- was elected association chaplain and had life time membership
* Worked heavily to recruit nurses to join the organization and in 1911 worked at the Howard Orphan Asylum in NY
* Concerned with women’s equality and supported movement for women’s suffrage
  + One of the first to register in Boston at age 76 after amendment passed
* Had breast cancer in 1923 and died in 1926
* The amount of AA nurses doubled after her death and NACGN established an award in her name to raise status of AA nurses

Source: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/partners/early/e_pioneers_mahoney.html>

**Dentist:** Ida Gray Nelson Rollins

Life Span: Feb 20, 1867- May 3, 1953

* Born in Clarksville, TN, then moved to Cincinnati, Ohio
* Attended University of Michigan
* 1860, worked in the office of Jonathan Taft- a local dentist who supported women in the profession. Became Dean of Dental Department at UM and maintained his office in Cincinnati.
* He encouraged her to apply because of the experience she had in his office.
* She enrolled in 1887 and graduated in 1890, and returned to Cincinnati to establish own private practice
* 1895 married James S. Nelson and moved to Chicago where she was the first AA women to practice dentistry
* mentored other AA women into the profession

Source: <http://www.aaregistry.org/historic_events/view/ida-gray-nelson-first-black-dentistry>

http://hbcuconnect.com/content/217252/black-history-daily-who-was-the-first-black-female-dentist