



Dr. Daniel Hale Williams House, 445 E. 42nd Street, Chicago, Illinois

Photograph by ABC for NPS, 1974

Dr. Daniel Hale Williams House

445 East 42nd Street
Chicago, Illinois Cook County

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Oil portrait and commemorative plaque, Dr. Daniel H. Williams
Entry foyer, Provident Hospital

Dr. Daniel Hale Williams
(1858-1931)

**He performed the first
successful heart operation.**

On a blustery night in 1893, a man was rushed to Chicago's Provident Hospital with a knife wound just a fraction of an inch from his heart.

On duty was the hospital's young founder, Dr. Dan Williams, who immediately summoned six of his colleagues to perform the impossible: a heart operation. With great skill, Dr. Williams opened the man's chest and repaired the wound. "Sewed up the human heart," headlined a Chicago newspaper. It was the first successful heart operation in history.

That operating room was a long way from the small frame house near Pittsburgh where Dan was born. By the time he was twelve, his father was dead, and his mother had deserted. So Dan left home and became a barber to finance his education at a Wisconsin academy.

Then he went to Chicago, where a prominent family assisted him through Northwestern Medical School. He graduated in 1883 and opened an office in Chicago. In 1891, Williams founded the Provident Hospital, the first infirmary open to all, regardless of race or creed.

From Chicago, Williams was called to Washington to reorganize and head the Freedmen's Hospital, then operated by the federal government. His reorganization of Freedmen's created the beginnings of a nursing school. Under Williams' administration, this once primitive institution became the forerunner of our modern hospital.

Every time another heart operation saves a life, it is a living tribute to a great ingenious American.

HERE ARE THE ACTUAL INSTRUMENTS
USED BY DR. DANIEL HALE WILLIAMS
IN THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL OPERATION
ON THE HEART.



Provident Hospital

Display case in west corridor of main floor.