

# S. H. Thompson

Physician

1870-1950

by Nancy J. Hulston

African Americans in the Kansas City area in the late nineteenth century had virtually no access to hospital care. Basically, home remedies served as the only health care for most families. Dr. Solomon Henry Thompson began a "Black Hospital Movement" in the area that began to address the health concerns of the ethnic communities.

The charter for the Dr. Thompson's new hospital was filed on December 5, 1899. The first location of Douglass Hospital was at 312 Washington Boulevard, Kansas City, Kansas. Douglass Hospital was the first clinic west of the Mississippi to serve the African American community, although all ethnic groups were welcome there.

Dr. Thompson was born in Charlestown, West Virginia, in 1870. He graduated from Storer College in Harper's Ferry, and in 1892 he received his medical degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. Dr. Thompson settled in Kansas City, Kansas, in 1898, where he opened a pharmacy. With Kansas City, Missouri, physician, T. C. Unthank, M.D., Dr. Thompson founded Douglass Hospital and Training School for Nurses.

Dr. Thompson's hospital fell under the authority of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1905. In 1924 the hospital purchased a new building at 336 Quindaro Boulevard. In 1937 it moved, for the last time, to 3700 North 27th Street, on the campus of Western University.

As segregation of area hospitals declined after World War II, patients and income gradually decreased at Douglass Hospital. The hospital's situation declined throughout the 1950s and '60s. Finally, in 1977 the hospital closed permanently.

S. H. Thompson was affiliated with Douglass Hospital for over 50 years. He died on December 11, 1950. A memorial to Dr. Thompson described him as "An eminent pioneer physician of Kansas City, Kansas. An outstanding citizen and a Christian gentleman."



## Sources

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