

Daniel Hale Williams Encyclopedia Article

Daniel Hale Williams

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Daniel Hale Williams

1858-1931

African-American physician who performed one of the earliest open-heart operations. In 1893 a young stabbing victim was brought to Provident Hospital in Chicago. Williams opened the chest, exposed the heart, and sutured the wound in the pericardium, the membrane that covers the heart. Although at the time operating on the heart was considered impossible, the patient survived. Williams contributed to improvements in Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, DC, and other aspects of medical care and medical education for African-Americans.