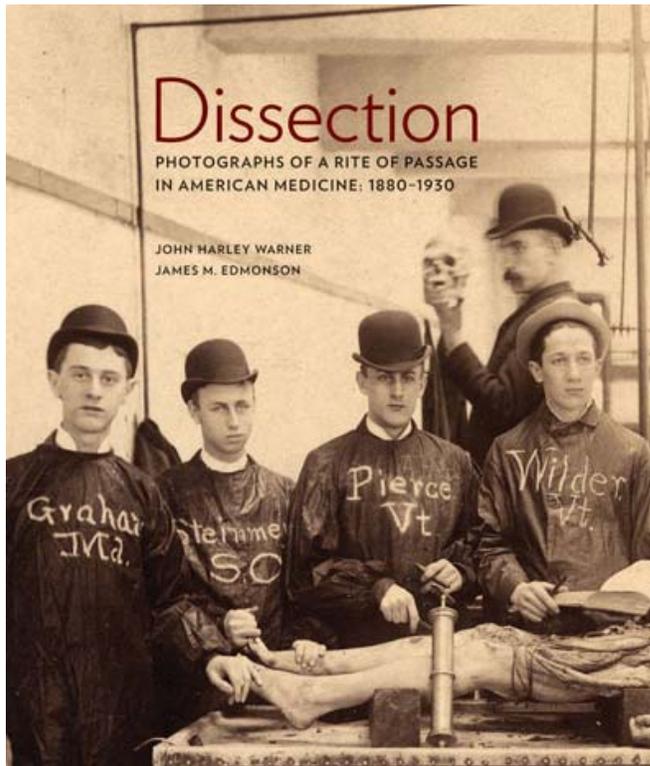


Dissecting a Few Photographs



This past winter it was suggested to me that I might find something of interest in this book: *Dissection, Photographs of a Rite of Passage in American Medicine 1880-1930* by John H. Warner and James M. Edmonson, published 2009.

Dissection arrived via inter-library loan. I'm sure the librarian rolled her eyeballs when this book turned up, but we didn't have to meet face to face. In these times of Covid-19, books, in brown paper bags, are left for pick-up on the front porch of the library.

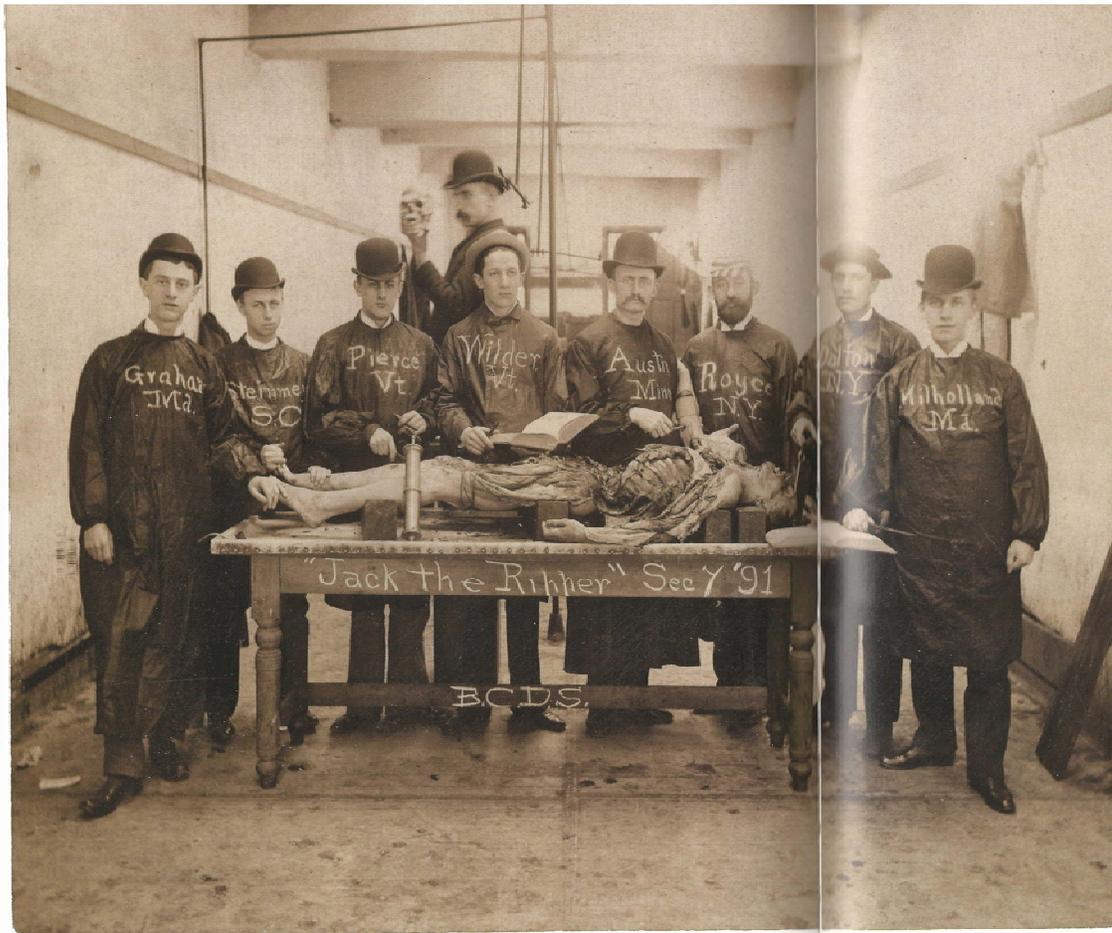
Well, yes, this is a fascinating book. Two photographs fired up my curiosity.

- The cover photo is a detail of a larger group photo on Page 106 of young men posed with their cadaver at the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery. Being a native born Vermonter, all things Vermont are of interest; so Mr. Pierce and Mr. Wilder were first on my list to investigate. This led to the 1887 West Hartford Bridge Disaster, the deadliest train wreck in Vermont.
- On Page 153 of *Dissection* is a photo of a skeleton with his arm draped around a student at the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The skeleton's name is Chimmie Fadden.

Here was a huge coincidence. One of my favorite Philadelphia characters is Bertha Clear who, in her impetuous youth, married a Living Skeleton. Near the end of her life she was a character actress in the first silent movies. Her most noted role was as the mother of the Irish rascal Chimmie Fadden.

I had to work through a case of mistaken identity, ran into a terrific first-person account of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, then delved into the world of women automobilists of the early 1900s.

**The Green Mountain Boys
of the
Baltimore College of Dental Surgery**



Dissection, Pages 106/107
Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, Class of 1891

<p>William F. Graham - SC* 1870-1930?</p> <p>William M. Steinmeyer - SC 1870-1937</p> <p>Willard M. Pierce - VT 1871-1915</p> <p>Frederick R. Wilder - VT 1871-1923</p> <p>Walter V. Austin - MN 1861-1897</p>	<p>Frederick C. Royce - NY 1857-1940</p> <p>Ulysses A. Dalton - NY 1863-1908</p> <p>George V. Milholland - MD 1872-1944</p> <p>Man holding skull - unknown</p> <p>*Graham came from South Carolina, not Massachusetts as noted on the photo</p>
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Willard M. Pierce - Vermont

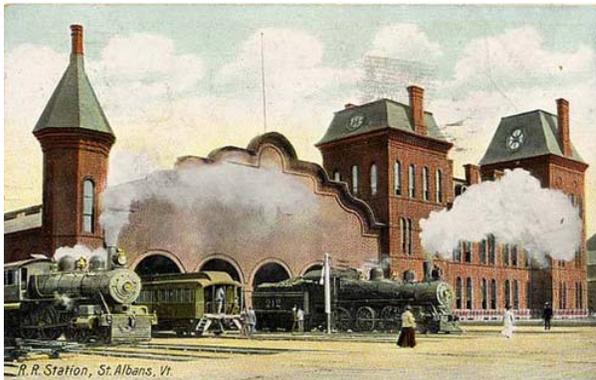


Willard M. Pierce 1871-1915, son of Willard Pierce 1834-1897 and Sarah Gray 1845-1929, grew up in St. Albans, Vermont, the fourth kid in a family of five. His father owned a local hotel called the St. Albans House. The building stands today at 60 Lake Street.

Though 20-year-old Willard has a direct, all-business look in the *Dissection* photograph and is listed as a member of the Class of '91, he is not among those who graduated. The 1899 St. Albans City Directory lists Willard as a dental student; the 1900 St. Albans census gives his occupation as a dentist.

Willard and his father were at odds. In an 1894 codicil to his will, Willard's father left Willard \$100, the remainder of his ample estate to be equally divided between Willard's mother and his four siblings. After Father Pierce's death, the family agreed, against the provisions of the will, to divide the estate in a more equitable manner.

On a May afternoon in 1900, Willard was arrested, tried and fined \$5 for being intoxicated. At this point, Willard gave up on his dental career.



By 1901, Willard took a job as a clerk with the Central Vermont Railroad, which had a major station in St. Albans. In 1904 Willard accepted a position with the American Express Company in Boston. Willard's brother Frank lived in Boston.

Central Vermont Railroad
St. Albans Train Station

In 1915, Willard died of pneumonia in Boston. His obituary cites an unnamed widow in Boston. Willard's sister Nellie escorted his body home to St. Albans on the Boston-Montreal train. Willard is probably buried in the Greenwood Cemetery.



Swanton - home of Frederick Wilder

St. Albans - home of Willard Pierce

Frederick R. Wilder - Vermont



Frederick R. Wilder 1871-1923 is a son of Edgar Wilder 1837-1887 and Lucy Place 1839-1916. Frederick was raised in Swanton, Vermont, which is north and adjacent to St. Albans. Undoubtedly Frederick and Willard Pierce were acquaintances before they headed off to dental school. In the 1870s and 1880s, Frederick's father Edgar Wilder was a dealer/manufacturer of carriages and sleighs. Edgar then took a job as traveling agent for S.N. Brown & Co. of Dayton, Ohio, selling wheels, hubs, and spokes for carriages.

The boys in the Wilder family all became doctors, perhaps influenced by their father's brother Dr. Hoyt R. Wilder 1848-1901, graduate of the Detroit Medical College class of 1871. Frederick's older brother Edgar Wilder 1863-1943 went to Johns Hopkins University and then the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, graduating in 1892, a year after Fredrick. The youngest brother Winford O. Wilder 1878-1950 was a physician, attending Wesleyan University and graduating from the University of Pennsylvania Medical College in 1904. Winford worked as a doctor overseas in WW I, then practiced in Massachusetts.

WILDER & HARDIN, Dentists.

Dr. F. R. WILDER, of Louisville, Will be at Dr. J. M. Hardin's office in Brandenburg, Ky., on the 4th Monday and Tuesday of every month, following Wednesday and Thursday at Irvington, and will be prepared to all kinds of Dental Work by the latest improved methods. Teeth positively extracted without pain by the use of A. O. and Vitalized Air Artificial teeth of different grades and prices. Our prices will be found reasonable and to suit the times. Gold filling, bridge work, gold and porcelain crowns a specialty. Appointments made by writing to

DR. J. M. HARDIN, Brandenburg, Ky.

The Breckenridge News (Cloverport, KY) 10-14-1896

Directly after their graduations from the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, the brothers Frederick and Edgar moved to Louisville, Kentucky. For a while they were partners (Wilder Bros., Dentists). Frederick teamed up with an older dentist, Dr. J.M. Hardin, serving communities in rural Kentucky. Frederick attended all the dental association meetings in the area and presented papers such as "Gold and Tin Filling," "High Fusing Porcelain," "Something New in Prosthetic Dentistry," and "Social Work of Our Society."

In 1906, Frederick boarded a fully occupied street car and was obliged to stand on the running board. The street car passed a wagon parked beside the track. Fred struck the wagon and was thrown from the car. In addition to a scalp wound, cuts on his hands, face and knees, he lost a tooth. His research into prosthetic dentistry probably paid off.

Frederick died in Louisville in 1923, age 52, from pneumonia. He is buried in Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville. Frederick's wife Minnie Bennett and daughter Olivia survived him.



West Hartford Vermont Bridge Disaster 1887

A defining event of the Wilder family was the death of the father in the 1887 Central Vermont Railroad's West Hartford Bridge Disaster, the most deadly train wreck in Vermont history.

On Saturday, February 5, 1887, about 2:20 in the morning, 18 degrees below zero, the Boston-Montreal train had just left White River Junction, heading north to St. Albans. As the train approached the West Hartford Bridge over the White River, the rear sleeper car derailed and pulled the next three cars with it (the fourth car decoupled from the rest of the train). The four cars plunged 45 feet off the Hartford Bridge, landing in the ice-covered White River.

The four cars, heated by coal stoves and lighted by oil and kerosene lamps, burst into flames, which in turn set the bridge on fire which collapsed onto the burning cars.

Thirty-seven people died, 50 were injured and 28 escaped physical harm.

Edgar Wilder, traveling agent for S.N. Brown & Co. of Ohio, was on the train, headed home to St. Albans. One day before the accident the Wilder family had received a letter from Edger stating he would be home on Saturday, "that he had been anxious for time to get home, and was glad he could turn in this direction once more." Wilder perished in the fire, burned beyond recognition. One of Edgar's sons and Edgar's brother, Dr. Hoyt R. Wilder of Swanton, rushed to the scene. A few of Edgar's business cards were found along with bits of clothing and a pocket-book believed to belong to Wilder.

Positive identification of Edgar Wilder wasn't made until long-time St. Albans dentist Dr. Charles S. Campbell 1855-1913 was brought to the scene in West Hartford. Dr. Campbell was able to identify the dental work he had performed on Wilder.

Edgar Wilder had the foresight to purchase an accident insurance policy. By April, Lucy Wilder received a settlement of \$1,000 which surely went some way toward covering the medical training of her three sons, Frederick and Edgar, Jr. dentists and Winford a physician.

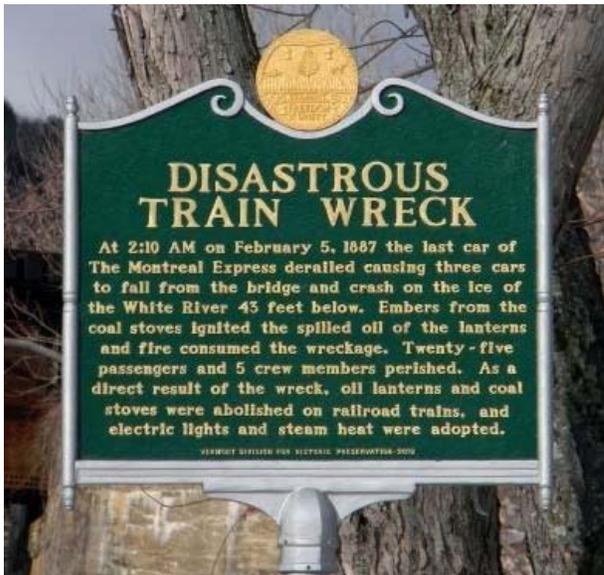
A review of *Dissection* and a few photos

<http://morbidanatomy.blogspot.com/2009/04/dissection-photographs-of-rite-of.html>

Annual Catalogue of the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, 1891

https://books.google.com/books/about/Annual_Catalogue_of_the_Baltimore_Colleg.html?id=C7IGAQAAMAAJ

The Dental Cosmos, Volume 33, "Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, Commencement 1891," Page 406 <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/dencos/browseissues.html>



19 photos of the Hartford train wreck can be found in the Dartmouth College Archival Collections

<https://www.library.dartmouth.edu/research-collections/collections>

In the Dartmouth College Photographic Files search for "Hartford Vermont Bridge Disaster"

The Wrong Rail in the Wrong Place at the Wrong Time: The 1887 West Hartford Bridge Disaster by J.A. Ferguson, *Vermont History* Vol. 81, No. 1 (Winter/Spring 2013): 52–74

<https://vermonthistory.org/volume-81-2013>

What Happened to the Rest of Them?

Mr. Pierce was the only young man in the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery photo who did not continue on with a dental practice. All but Mr. Graham have Findagrave memorials.

After graduation, Graham and Steinmeyer went home to South Carolina and had long careers. Austin practiced in Minneapolis until his untimely death six years after graduation. Royce came from Middletown, NY but set up his practice in Brooklyn. Dalton took his own life in 1908 in Binghamton, NY. Milholland had a long career in Maryland.

Chimmie Fadden and His Partner

Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

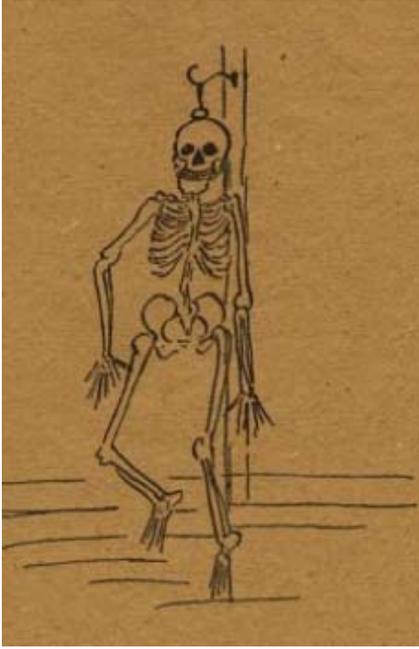


[iDEA: Drexel Libraries E-Repository and Archives
http://hdl.handle.net/1860/lca:2360](http://hdl.handle.net/1860/lca:2360)

This intriguing photo is on Page 153 of *Dissection*. The skeleton and his partner look as though they are about to leap from the couch and tango across the floor! Archivists have identified the former as Chimmie Fadden and the latter as Sylvia Hatton, both enrolled in the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania (WMCP) in Philadelphia 1895-1896.

Chimmie Fadden is a fictional character, variously identified as a "poor but amiable Irish lad" and "a lively and voluble irrepressible hero" who lived in New York's Bowery. A well-meaning rogue with a "good-hearted and devil-may-care attitude," Chimmie blundered about, getting himself into one pickle or another. Chimmie's humorous exploits, written in Bowery dialect, were penned by Edward W. Townsend (1855-1942) and published in the *New York Sun* and other newspapers during the early 1890s. A collection of the Chimmie Fadden stores was published in 1895 and a stage play opened the next year. Chimmie Fadden: a light hearted, humorous name for your skeleton.

One of my favorite Philadelphia characters is Bertha Clear (1862-1917), an aspiring musician, singer and actress. In 1884 Bertha had a short marriage to Josiah B. Garrison (1858-1884), a "Living Skeleton" she met at the Dime Museum on Arch Street. Her second marriage to George Diggle (1850-1888) ended with his death--Bertha was implicated but acquitted after a high profile trial. Bertha's life took a turn for the better--her third husband Landis M. Wanbaugh (1868-1911) was an actor and the couple appeared in plays on the east coast and traveled across the United States on the vaudeville circuit. After Wanbaugh's death, Bertha billed herself as Mrs. Lewis McCord (her husband's stage name) and played character parts in the first silent films. In 1915 Bertha was cast as Chimmie Fadden's mother in two Cecil B. DeMille films--*Chimmie Fadden* and *Chimmie Fadden Out West*.



Ye Serene Skeleton

*Ye skeleton seems happy quite,
Hung by his head morn, noon and night--
Though students come and students go
He still swings gently to and fro;
And though girls bang his bones about,
Professors twist his joints quite out,
Still wags his jaw and waves his hand,
And wears a smile serene and bland;
Unruffled, as we all should be,
By what he can not help, you see.*

Poem and drawing from *Ye Medical Student's Primer*, written by Martha Tracy in 1901. Dr. Tracy graduated from WMCP Class of 1904 and served as Dean from 1917 to 1940. View here <http://hdl.handle.net/1860/lca:1347>

It's easy to see why a medical student would call her skeleton Chimmie Fadden, but it's obscure to me how the name is known to the archivists of WMCP material. Rooting around the archives would probably answer this question.

* * *

Sylvia Hatton is more difficult to identify. A woman by that name doesn't exist!

The words written on the mat of the photo read:

Sylvia Hatton -(and my skeleton!) (Eleanor F. Preston) 1895-96

Issues of the *Annual Announcement of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania* include lists of matriculates for the sessions 1895/96 and 1896/97. On each list are the following names:

- **Eleanor Fairman Preston**, Marion, Virginia
- **Sylvia Parsons Blake**, Richwood, Ohio
- **Julia Elizabeth Hatton**, Augusta Georgia

Is Chimmie Eleanor Preston's skeleton? Did Eleanor write the inscription on the photo? Did Eleanor mix up the names of her two classmates? The WMCP archives might shed light on these questions, but it's a long way to Philadelphia so I'll sort out the three women and see what comes up.

Annual Announcement of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania - view at Hathi-Trust
<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100607112>

United States Deceased Physician File (AMA), 1864-1968, database with images at FamilySearch



Eleanor Fairman Preston 1876-1952, born in Abingdon, VA, is the daughter of Robert John Preston 1841-1906 and Martha E. Sheffey 1849-1898. Eleanor's father was a physician, graduate of the University of Virginia School of Medicine 1867.

Eleanor graduated from the Mary Baldwin Seminary of Staunton, Virginia, in 1895 (voted smartest in her class) and entered the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia the same year. She took a year off in the middle of her studies and graduated with the Class of 1901.

In August of 1901, Eleanor passed the Virginia Medical Examining Board (second highest mark) and moved to California for an internship at the Hospital for Children in San Francisco.

Eleanor at WMCP circa 1901

In 1903 Eleanor married fellow doctor James Thomas Watkins 1871-1934. The couple lived in California and raised four boys.

It is not clear if Eleanor engaged in a medical practice at any time after her marriage. Google searches and old newspapers reveal she was active in the affairs of her community. Her poetry was published and she wrote a book about the early builders of San Francisco.

Of great interest is Eleanor's intimate, eye-witness account of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Eleanor was married at the time; her first child had recently died. The Watkins house survived the quake but was destroyed in the ensuing fires. Read Eleanor's riveting account here <http://www.johnmartin.com/earthquakes/eqpapers/0000047.htm>

The Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania archives are housed in the Drexel University Archives. Items relating to Eleanor F. Preston:

- Above photo - detail of "Three students at home with obstetrical mannequin, bottle and glasses," 1901, <http://hdl.handle.net/1860/lca:2590>
- Portrait of Dr. Eleanor Preston Watkins (currently not available on line)
- References to an Alumna folder of Eleanor F. P. Watkins, M.D.

Eleanor's account of the 1906 earthquake was published in California Geology, December 1981, Vol. 34, No. 12 which can be found here. The text is fuzzy but the photographs are included. https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/Documents/Publications/California-Geology-Magazine/CG_1981-12.pdf

Sylvia Parsons Blake 1873-1958 was born in Ohio, the daughter of Sherman Marshall Blake 1831-1884 and Harriet Janes Parsons 1835-1876. Mr. Blake was a prosperous businessman in Richwood, Ohio. Besides interests in a bank and a lumber yard, he was part owner of S.M. Blake & Co. Drug Store which sold everything from wallpaper to school supplies, rented books and flogged "Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil," a cure-all for whatever ailed you.

Sylvia taught school for a year or so in Ohio before entering the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia. She graduated in the Class of 1897.

Dr. Blake's first position was resident physician at the Philadelphia Lying-In Charity Hospital. In 1899 she was set to travel to India as a Presbyterian missionary doctor but apparently her health precluded this move.

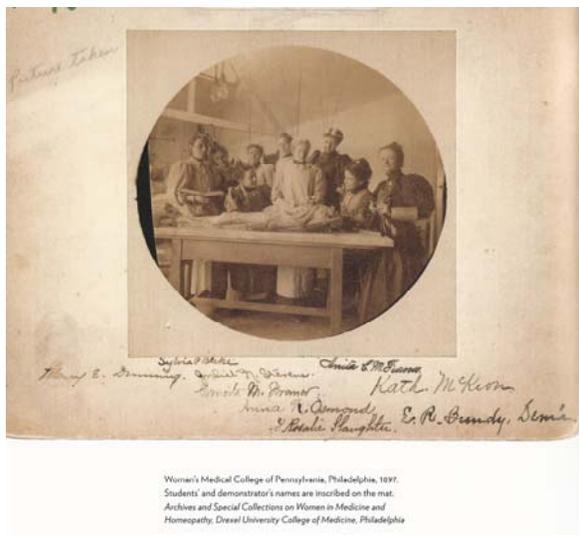
After 1900 it's hard to track her career. Sylvia pops up in places like New York City; Rochester, NY; North Carolina; Ohio; and Florida. She summered at Lake Hopatcong, NJ (as did Julia Elizabeth Hatton).

In 1923, Sylvia, age 50, married the widower Wellington Martin 1860-1927. Wellington died shortly after the couple returned from a tour of Europe.



There are two photos of Sylvia in the Drexel Archives. Due to Covid-19 staffing shortages and a faulty server at iDea, Drexel's electronic archives, neither photo is currently available for closer study.

Individual portraits of the Class of 1897 were gathered onto one sheet and numbered. Presumably there is a corresponding key to identify Sylvia and a scan of her photo may be clear enough for comparison to Chimmy Fadden's partner.



This photo is from the scrapbook of Laura Heath Hills, Class of 1896, housed in the Drexel Archives.

Here is a scan of the photo as it appears on Page 118 of *Dissection*. The student standing, second from left, is probably Sylvia.

Julia Elizabeth Hatton 1865-1952 was born in Georgia, daughter of Joseph Hatton 1829-1903 and Georgiana E. Spelman 1834-1914. Joseph Hatton was a physician and druggist in Augusta. Julia first trained as a nurse.

1887 - graduated from the New York Hospital Training School for Nurses, NYC

1894-1895 - to Leipzig, Germany for study and travel

1895-1898 - attended Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

1898-1899 - Cornell University Medical College, New York City, Class of 1899

Julia, age 34, medical degree in hand, set up her practice on Third Street in Brooklyn, New York. For 20 years Julia's household included:

- Julia's friend and probably mentor Dr. Florence Leigh Jones 1857-1928. Florence graduated in 1882 from the New York Hospital Training School for Nurses and was an 1895 graduate of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- Julia's life-long partner, school teacher Mary G. Hagar 1871-1952.



Julia (center) is identified in this 1909 newspaper photo. She was known professionally as Dr. Elizabeth Hatton. Left is Julia's sister Daisy Hatton Seaman.

Daisy wholeheartedly embraced automobiles. She, driving and doing mechanical repairs, and her husband, riding shot-gun and navigating, traveled through the eastern US and back and forth to California.

2-14-1909 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Page 51
Photo caption: "Dr. Elizabeth Hatton in Center"
The article interviews Daisy, Elizabeth and other women drivers.

In January 1909, the Women's Motor Club of New York sponsored a two-day endurance run from New York to Philadelphia and back. Daisy drove her Franklin Model D. The rules of the run allowed only women passengers. Daisy took along three doctors--her sister Julia Elizabeth Hatton, Florence Leigh Jones and Ellen Lysaght (Cornell Class of 1905).

This photo shows Daisy (Mrs. A.W. Seaman) at the wheel during the 1909 New York-Philadelphia event. Julia's in the front passenger seat, intently scoping out the road ahead.



Mrs. A.W. Seaman and passengers in Franklin car at Newark, New Jersey during the 1909 New York to Philadelphia Run. Detroit Public Library Digital Collections

<https://digitalcollections.detroitpubliclibrary.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A198251>

Julia had a busy medical practice in Brooklyn--office hours and home visits. She drove a "runabout" through the streets of Brooklyn, a red cross physician's sign placed on the dashboard. The women in her household were active in the Suffragette movement. Dr. Florence Leigh Jones is probably one of the unsung heroines of early medical care for women and children.

In 1918 Julia and Daisy joined the Brooklyn division of the Women's Motor Corps of America. Julia was a driver for the new 12 passenger, 35 horsepower, three-quarter ton Reo Ambulance.



Julia's fictional story "A Psycho-Physical Study" is included in *Daughters of Aesculpius: Stories Written by Alumnae and Students of the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania*, published in 1897.

Summer vacations found Julia at Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey, a lively resort area. In 1916 the *Lake Hopatcong Breeze* reported Dr. Elizabeth Hatton was out on the lake in her new motor boat, installed with a high powered engine. "Dr. Hatton, besides being a noted motorist, canoeist and swimmer, is also a prominent poliomyelitis specialist."

In 1925, Julia and Mary packed up a touring car and moved to San Fernando, California. The women were approaching 60, but that didn't slow them down. Ship manifests show Julia and Mary returning from England in 1928 and France in 1931.

10-22-1936 *Los Angeles Evening Citizen News*
San Fernando, CA

Valley Pair Back from Long Automobile Trek

Experiences on a 12,000 mile motor trip through the British Isles, Canada and many states of this country are being related today by Dr. Elizabeth Hatton and Mary Hagar, world travelers, who arrived home Monday.

The two, who have visited nearly every country in the world, left San Fernando on June 3 for New York, where they sailed on the S.S. Lacoma for Ireland, taking their car with them. They motored through Scotland, England and Ireland, then embarked on the S.S. Ausonia Sept. 12 with Montreal as their destination. Thence they drove to New York, then to their home at 809 Fourth St., stopping en route to visit the Texas Centennial in Dallas.

Julia, 86, and Mary, 80, died within one month of each other in 1952.

View newspaper articles at FultonHistory.com

2-14-1909 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, "Women Who Run Their Own Cars Plan a Club House"
[Brooklyn NY Daily Eagle 1909 Grayscale - 1333.pdf](#)

10-1-1911 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Julia and Daisy travel to the Shenandoah Valley. Illustrated article.
[Brooklyn NY Daily Eagle 1911 Grayscale - 8591.pdf](#)

6-23-1918 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* - New Reo Ambulance
[Brooklyn NY Daily Eagle 1918 Grayscale - 5113.pdf](#)

Who is the woman embraced by the bony Chimmie Fadden in the *Dissection* photo on Page 153? Sylvia Blake or Julia Hatton?

I enlarged available photographs, cropped heads and compared faces.

I'll put this investigation on hold for now. Covid-19 will eventually loosen its grip and the Drexel archivists will be back on track. A scan of Sylvia Blake's graduation photo may determine the identity of Chimmie Fadden's partner.

		
Chimmy Fadden's partner 1895/1896	Student standing 2 nd from left in photo on Page 118 of <i>Dis- section</i> . This might be Sylvia Blake.	Julia Elizabeth Hatton 1909