**Dr. Sophia Bethena Jones: Physician, educator**

**Sophia Bethena Jones** was born in [Chatham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chatham%2C_Ontario), [Canada West](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada_West), (1857-September 8, 1932) the daughter of James Monroe Jones and Emily F. Francis Jones. Her father, who was a [gunsmith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gunsmith) by trade, was born in North Carolina and was one of the first [African American](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Americans) graduates of [Oberlin College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oberlin_College). He was born into an [enslaved](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery_in_the_United_States) family and purchased their freedom in 1843.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-Jones,_Sophia_Bethena-3) In the year Sophia was born, he was involved with [John Brown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Brown_%28abolitionist%29)'s [abolition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abolitionism) activities in Canada West.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-4)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-Lubet-5)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-6)

Jones had three sisters: Anna Jones, Fredericka Jones, and Emma Jones, and two brothers: George Jones and James Jones.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-Jones,_Sophia_Bethena-3) Her sisters [Anna H. Jones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_H._Jones) (1855–1932) and Fredericka F. Jones (1860–1905) both became teachers.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-7)[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-8)

Sophia B. Jones attended the [University of Michigan Medical School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Michigan_Medical_School), finishing in 1885 as the school's first female graduate of African descent.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-9)

Career[

Sophia B. Jones became the first faculty member of African descent at [Spelman College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spelman_College%22%20%5Co%20%22Spelman%20College) when she was hired in 1885.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-Stories-10) While at Spelman, she organized the school's nurses training program and led their [infirmary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_aid_room).[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-:1-11)

After her time at Spelman, Jones worked at [Wilberforce University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilberforce_University), and practiced medicine in [St. Louis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Louis), [Philadelphia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia), and [Kansas City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kansas_City%2C_Missouri).[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-12) She also earned a patent in 1890 for a "Barrel trunk."[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-13)

Jones had a passion for prioritizing [public health](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_health) and [health equity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health_equity). Her article, "Fifty Years of Public Negro Health," was published in 1913.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-:1-11) This article attempted to explain the causes of increased mortality among African Americans after emancipation, such as increased infant mortality and an increase in cases of tuberculosis.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-:2-14) In this article, she also advocated for more black doctors and nurses as a method of reducing mortality rates among African Americans, saying of black nurses "Not only to her own race has she been of service, but also to the white race."[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-:2-14)

Personal life

Late in life, Jones retired with her sister Anna to [Monrovia, California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monrovia%2C_California), where they ran an orange grove.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-15) Sophia and Anna both died in 1932; Sophia B. Jones was 75 years old.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophia_B._Jones#cite_note-16)

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