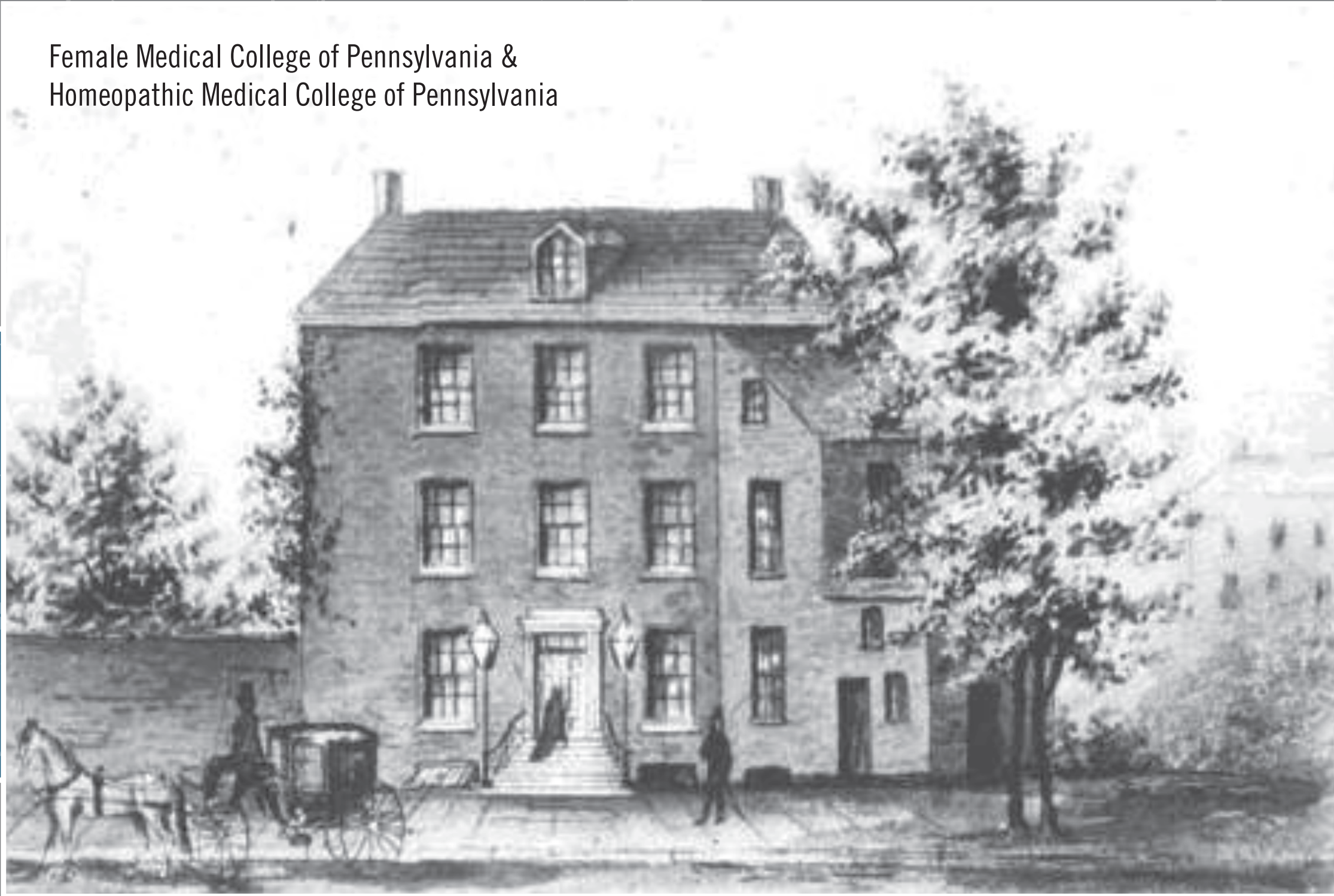


Female Medical College of Pennsylvania &  
Homeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania



## FURTHER STUDIES AND TRAGEDY

While teaching in Hamilton, **William King began studying homoeopathic medicine** with a local doctor. In the fall of 1856 he entered the Homeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania, graduating in March 1858. That St. Patrick's Day he set up a practice in Brighton, with an income of about \$200 a month, feeling he was about to be *“in a fair way to acquire both fame and wealth”*.

Meantime, **Sarah had remained in Brighton with her parents**. The couple seem to have resumed living together at the time William began his medical practice, but soon after, he **became involved with one of his patients, Dorcas Garrett**. This ended abruptly in the summer of 1858, when Miss Garrett threatened to make public a letter from King. He had begged her not to marry someone else too quickly as **his wife was ill and would probably soon die**.

But that June, far from dying, **Sarah became pregnant again. And the now Dr. King, apparently up to the challenge, became embroiled in another affair!** The woman was somewhat younger than he: *“a young lady of about 20 years... well educated, of a rather... coquettish turn, though not what would be called handsome”*, **Melinda Freeland Vandervoort**.

On October 10, **Dr. King claimed in a letter to Melinda that his wife was very ill**. Four days later, she indeed *“took sick”*, suffering from severe vomiting until her death on November 4th. King had resisted calling in other medical practitioners, until the very last moment, saying her problem was ulceration of the womb, **praying that his standard practice for such conditions would “have its desired effect”**.

**Four days later Dr. King was back at work**, having exhibited *“paroxysms of grief”* in the meantime. But two events changed things dramatically:

- his mother-in-law discovered a **picture of Melinda** with damaging correspondence in King's coat, and
- his father-in-law informed him that a **coroner's inquest** was in progress.

**Dr. William Henry King was now on the run!**



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