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## Exhibits

150th Anniversary of the Birth of Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D. On January 4 the Library will open an exhibit in observance of the sesquicentennial of the birth of Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910), the first woman medical doctor of modern times. A single-case "Showcase Exhibit," located in the west foyer on the Ground Floor of the Main Building, the display will consist primarily of materials from the Library's extensive collection of Blackwell Family Papers.

Dr. Blackwell was born in England on February 3, 1821, and came to the United States with her family in 1832. When she was 17 years old her father died, and to help support her family she began to teach school. In 1847, after applying to a number of medical schools, she was accepted by Geneva (now Hobart) College in upstate New York. Shown in the exhibit is her copy of a resolution by the student body voting for her acceptance. Also shown is an 1849 letter of Miss Blackwell's, written four days before she received her medical diploma, reporting that she had satisfactorily passed her examinations "this morning."

Also on display are 19th- and 20th-century views of the New York Infirmary for Women and Children, established by Dr. Blackwell in 1857, and a note from Florence Nightingale opposing the idea of a medical school for women. Two books by Dr. Blackwell, both from the Library's Rare Book Division, illustrate her life-long interest in hygienic practices, preventive medicine, and sex education for the young. Accompanying one of these books is a memorandum in her hand describing the reaction to its subject matter by a member (female) of the firm that published the lady publisher threw the advance set of proof sheets into the fire.

Polish Folklore and Folk Art, an exhibit prepared by the Slavic and Central European Division, will open on January 4 on the Fifth Floor of the Annex Building and will continue through February 28.

Polish folk art is best known to Americans through the influence of folk music on such composers as Chopin and Paderewski, or in the strains of the krakowiaks and other Polish dances which are heard on many an American dance floor.

But it is not with music alone that the Polish people have expressed their national character; as early as the beginning of the 19th century the systematic collection of Polish folklore began--folk customs, dance legends, and rites.

Only later was interest concentrated on folk painting and sculpture, at a time when, in the rest of Europe, such artists as Matisse, Picasso, and Brancusi were finding their inspiration in primitive art.

Polish folk art, as is the case throughout the world, is closely interconnected with the people's daily needs for shelter, food, and clothing. The folk tradition may be traced far back into time through potsherds and medieval examples of fabrics using the stripes so typical of Polish costume. And there are a few surviving buildings in the folk tradition which date from before the 18th century. Most of that which remains today, however, is an expression of the more recent period.