

Mary Jane "Jennie" Van Holland Baker

Doctor, Suffragist, Enumerator

The U.S. Census Bureau has always been ahead of the curve when it comes to employing women. Ever since 1880, when it started using professional enumerators rather than U.S. marshals, the Census Office has employed women in that role. With the advent of the Hollerith tabulating machine in 1890, women moved into the role of keypunchers. By 1909, 10 years before the 19th Amendment granted national women's suffrage, over 50 percent of the Census Bureau's 624 permanent employees were women. As women proved themselves as capable as the men, and with the increasing number of women in the workforce, it became harder for the Census Bureau to justify assigning all supervisory positions to men. By 1920, the Census Bureau would once again push forward appointing the first five female supervisors, as well as the first three female expert chiefs of divisions. Many of these pioneering women who worked on the census in these early years also broke through in other fields, such as law, medicine, education, activism, journalism, and the arts.



From the National Woman's Party
(www.nationalwomansparty.org)
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Mary Jane Van Holland, usually known as Jennie, was born on May 25, 1852, in Brooklyn, New York. Jennie's father James, a bookbinder, passed away when she was a young child, and her mother, Eliza Harned, worked as a dressmaker to support Jennie and her brothers. Jennie attended Brooklyn Public School No. 19, and in 1877, she married Mills P. Baker. Unfortunately, both her husband and their only child, daughter Ella, passed away in 1879, and she decided to devote herself to the study and practice of medicine. In addition to the early deaths of her father, two brothers, husband, and child, Jennie was also influenced to enter medicine by her aunt, Dr. Clemence Harned Lozier. Dr. Lozier was a trailblazing physician and political activist who, in 1863, had established the New York Medical College and Hospital for

Jennie's 1880 census, above, showing her in college. Below, the header for one of the 1880 Census forms she enumerated.

Women, one of the first teaching hospitals for women. In all, Dr. Lozier inspired nine of her direct female relatives to join her profession. Jennie entered her aunt's college in 1879, and earned her medical degree on March 28, 1882.

While attending medical school, Jennie trained to work with all members of the population and she later joked that she would send men to the male doctors if they agreed to send all of the women and children to her, a prospect that the male physicians realized would significantly reduce their business. During this crucial stage of Jennie's education, she also served as a census enumerator in 1880. Similar to physicians, the job required knowledge of the local community, as well as the ability to gain the trust of the female housewives who most often answered the enumerator's questions.

Yesterday a TIMES reporter made the tour of several houses on West Forty-seventh-street in company with Mrs. Jenny V. H. Baker, a modest, prepossessing young widow, the niece of Mrs. Dr. Clemence Lozier, of West Forty-eighth-street. The fair census-taker, who had just lost her husband, was dressed in black throughout, carried a large portfolio under her arm, and was altogether as quiet and submissive in her demeanor as the most imperious of her sex could demand. She rang the door-bell of a "swell" house close to Fifth-avenue, and a white-capped French *bonne* answered the call.

The New York Times (New York, NY) June 5, 1880.

The ample platform of Association Hall was transformed into a parterre of flowers last evening in honor of the 10 graduates of the New-York Medical College and Hospital for Women, whose ninety-ninth annual Commencement was celebrated with appropriate exercises and the usual distribution of diplomas. The degree of M. D. was conferred upon Mrs. Jennie Van Holland Baker, Miss Sarah A. Cook, Mrs. Anna J. Crouthers, Miss Fannie Herriott Kellogg, Mrs. Margaretha B. von der Luhe, Miss Mary Ella Mann, Mrs. Isabelle Mathison Rankine, Mrs. Georgiana Delancy Read, Miss Annie Smith, and Miss Adah Carr.

The New York Times (New York, NY) March 29, 1882.

Starting on June 2, the day after Census Day, and ending on June 16, Jennie counted 2,244 people in her enumeration district in Brooklyn. The 1880 Census marked an impressive expansion over previous censuses and the results, encompassing demographic, social, and economic statistics, as well as special reports on Alaska and American Indians, filled 22 volumes.

Following her census work, and after receiving her medical degree, Jennie established an impeccable reputation as a doctor. By 1889, she was the chief of staff of the Brooklyn Memorial Hospital for Women and Children, in addition to serving in the dispensary and on the board of managers. Jennie stayed at Memorial Hospital, surviving a fire and reconstruction, as well as constant funding battles, until the hospital was finally absorbed into a larger institution in the early 20th century. Known for her work with women and children, Jennie also possessed a reputation as an efficient and quick surgeon—important skills during a time when unreliable and developing methods of patient sedation meant that time constraints greatly impacted surgical outcomes. Throughout her life, Jennie remained active in several medical societies and clubs, including the King County Homeopathic Medical Society, the New York State Homeopathic Society, and the American Institute of Homeopathy.

While developing her medical skills, Jennie simultaneously fought for the equal rights of women. From the time she entered medical college until the passage of the 19th Amendment, Jennie spoke, traveled and advocated for women's suffrage and their inclusion in civic life. She helped found the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Political Equality League and the National Woman's Party. She served on the local, state, and national suffrage societies as well as the Brooklyn Women's Club. Jennie's medical background overlapped with her political activities as she taught women basic anatomy and

180 BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS.			
TABLE 2.—HOSPITALS AND			
NAME AND LOCATION.	Supervised and maintained by—	Classes of patients treated.	Year when founded, etc.
NEW YORK—Continued.			
940 Bedford Home Country Sanitarium Bedford Hill.	Private corporation	Consumptives	1867
941 Binghamton City Hospital 34-40 Mitchell avenue.	City of Binghamton	All classes	1896
942 Bedford Dispensary and Hospital 343-345 Ralph avenue.	Private corporation	All classes of indigent etc.	1888
943 Bethany Dispensary Hospital 57 St. Nicholas avenue.	Bethany Dispensary Society of the East German Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.	All, except contagious	1902
944 Bradford Street Emergency Hospital 108 Bradford street.	Department of Public Charities.	All, except contagious	1902
945 Brooklyn Central Dispensary 20 Third avenue.	Private corporation	All classes of sick poor	1855
946 Brooklyn City Dispensary 11 Thirtieth street.	Private corporation	All classes of sick poor	1846
947 Brooklyn Eastern District Dispensary and Hospital 10-12 South Third street.	Private corporation	All, except chronic and contagious	1851
948 Brooklyn Eye and Ear Hospital and Dispensary 94 Livingston street.	Private corporation	Eye, ear, throat, skin, and nervous cases	1868
949 Brooklyn Hospital Raymond street and The Kalb avenue.	Private corporation	All, except contagious and chronic	1845
950 Bushwick and East Brooklyn Dispensary 155-157 Myrtle avenue.	Private corporation	All classes of sick poor	1878
951 Bushwick Hospital Howard avenue and Monroe street.	Private corporation	All, except contagious	1894
952 Central Homeopathic Dispensary 208 Howard street.	Private corporation	All classes of sick poor	1883
953 Cumberland Street Hospital 12-14 Cumberland street.	Commissioner of Public Charities	All classes of sick poor	1902
954 East New York Dispensary 29 Watkins street. (Coney Island.)	Private corporation	All classes of sick poor	1883
955 Emergency Hospital 150 Fifteenth street.	Department of Public Charities	All, except contagious	1901
956 Fifteenth Street Baptist Church Dispensary 150 Fifteenth street.	Fifteenth Street Baptist Church	All classes of sick poor	1901
957 Gates Avenue Homeopathic Dispensary 13 Gates avenue.	Private corporation	All classes of sick poor	1897
958 German Hospital St. Nicolas avenue and Stanhope street.	Private corporation	All classes	1899
959 Jewish Hospital Dispensary 70 Johnson avenue.	Jewish Hospital	All classes of sick poor	1901
960 Kings County Hospital (Flatbush.)	Department of Public Charities	All, except contagious	1840
961 Kingston Avenue Hospital Kingston avenue and Rutland road.	City of New York	Infectious	1887
962 Long Island College Hospital Pacific and Amity streets.	Private corporation	All, except contagious and insane	1858
963 Long Island Throat Hospital and Eye Infirmary 28 Wiloughby street.	Private corporation	Nose, throat, eye, and ear	1889
964 Lutheran Hospital East New York avenue and Jamaica street.	Lutheran Hospital Association of the City of New York	All, except contagious	1881
965 Memorial Dispensary 81 Bedford avenue.	Private corporation	Women and children	1884
966 Memorial Hospital for Women and Children 827 Sterling place.	Private corporation	All classes	1883

Jennie's Memorial Hospital for Women and Children, listed last, in the 1904 Census of Benevolent Institutions. This was one of the first special censuses conducted after Congress established a permanent Census Bureau in 1902.

hygiene techniques, and advocated for affordable healthcare for women and children in working families.



Dr. Jennie F. H. Baker.

In addition to her activism, Jennie continued working as a doctor almost her entire life. She also enjoyed traveling extensively and visited Europe several times, as well as Canada, Mexico, and the western United States. Jennie was active in the Universalist Church, was a charter member of the Chiropean Club, a Brooklyn women's club focused on health issues, and enjoyed singing. She passed away on January 15, 1931, in her lifelong home in Brooklyn, NY. The Census Bureau is proud of Jennie's pioneering medical work, civic service, and her contributions to her community and country.