



## Women Under the Knife: A History of Surgery

Ann Dally

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In the nineteenth century, major developments in internal surgery were due to operations on ovaries. Women bore the brunt of surgical experimentation and also reaped its rewards. Their need was great, but so was their compliance. From the first operation in America in 1809, much suffering was relieved at the expense of prolonged surgery endured by both black slaves and prosperous whites. Later, in the Victorian era, many surgeons looked at certain types of behavior as reasons for mutilating operations. Such procedures as "spaying" and clitoridectomies were performed to "cure" hysteria and masturbation, as well as questionable interventionalist surgery in pregnancy and childbirth which still continue today.

Women Under the Knife is an extraordinary history, giving a vivid picture--medical, literary, and sociological--of Victorian society in America and Europe.



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