

Rebecca Lee Crumpler:  
A Historical Trailblazer

Kylie Kutschera

Senior Division

Individual Website

Process Paper Words: 480

When I was first thinking about ideas for my topic, I thought about my interests and passions and how they could relate to the theme “Breaking Barriers in History.” One of my main interests is in medicine. I focused on some of the “firsts” in the medical field and I came across Rebecca Lee Crumpler, the first black female physician. I found, with some further research, that Crumpler broke multiple barriers in her lifetime, ones that I feel need to be shared. Not only did Crumpler break barriers but she also just loved to help people. Her story is incredible, and I wanted to bring more awareness to who she is and her amazing achievements. Most people have no idea who Rebecca Lee Crumpler was, and I wanted to change that.

Due to Rebecca Lee Crumpler living in the 19th Century, the amount of information and quality of the information regarding her is very scarce. With this in mind, I began my research on various websites that gave some basic biographies on her life. I found a few scholarly articles with biographies, as well as other articles about her peers, her school, and the time period she lived. As I dug deeper I was able to find a book that she wrote, which gave me direct insight on her thoughts and knowledge. Lastly, I was fortunate to have secured an interview with Dr. Melody T. McCloud, who has knowledge of Crumpler due to a memorial she put together in honor of Crumpler’s achievements. She sent me various resources as well as answers to a few questions I had.

I chose to do a website to present my project because I felt it would be a good way to show my topic and the time period in an organized way. I have some resources and pictures from my interview that are showcased on the website and add to the text. I

also feel that Rebecca Lee Crumpler has been forgotten in history and creating a website shows my goal of bringing her story to the present.

Rebecca Lee Crumpler broke multiple barriers in her lifetime. She was not only a female, but she was also a black American living during and after the Civil War, when tensions between races ran high. Crumpler became the first black female physician and was the first black to publish a medical-related book. She broke barriers in gender and race and paved a path for other black women to follow in her footsteps. Rebecca Lee Crumpler proved that you can do anything you put your mind to. Crumpler most likely didn't even know of her achievements, all she knew was that she was helping people who needed it most. That was enough for her, and what proves her broken barriers.