

**Rebecca Lee Crumpler** - the [first Black woman to earn a medical degree and practice as a physician in the United States](#)



Rebecca Lee Crumpler (1831—1895) is the [first Black woman to earn a medical degree and practice as a physician in the United States](#). She was also the first Black woman to author a medical text, "A Book of Medical Discourses," which was published in 1883. Immediately after medical school, she cared for those who needed help the most, primarily poor women and children, regardless of their ability to pay. After the Civil War, that mission took her Richmond VA, where she tended to recently freed Blacks and other poor people whom physicians would not treat. She faced both intense racial and gender discrimination, from both black and white physicians, including administrators who didn't allow her to admit patients and pharmacists who would not fill prescriptions she ordered. Nevertheless, she [described that experience](#) as "a proper field for real missionary work, and one that would present ample opportunities to become acquainted

with the diseases of women and children.” Her positivity and solution-minded focus on serving others earned her the respect of many in the medical profession.

Despite her pioneering service, she was buried next to her husband in an unmarked grave. It was not until July 2020, 125 years after her death that a ceremony was held, and proper headstone was erected in her memory. Vicky Gall, a history buff and president of the Friends of the Hyde Park Library found Dr. Crumpler’s gravesite and posted a [Go Fund Me to raise the money for a headstone](#). She was able to raise the money and inform the four medical schools in the Boston area of her discovery. All four institutions have honored Dr. Crumpler’s work. However, [Harvard and Boston University Medical Schools](#) spoke at the memorial services, erected permanent memorials on their campuses, and established scholarship funds to help students from marginalized populations in the name of Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler. Additionally, as a result of her service to the ailing population of Richmond VA after the Civil War, the Governor of VA has declared a [Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler Day](#)

Until a Go Fund Me drive, for 125 yrs (1895 to 2020), Rebecca Lee Crumpler, the [1st Black woman to earn a medical degree](#) and practice medicine in the U.S., also the 1st Black woman to author a medical text, "A Book of Medical Discourses." rested in an unmarked grave in Boston.