



Overlooked Historical Figures

This list is only a beginning and is by no means meant to be comprehensive and final. For additional historical figures, please explore the *New York Times* Overlooked series: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/obituaries/overlooked.html>

Al-Razi, Persian physician, chemist, philosopher and scholar who lived from 865 to 925 C. E. He is known as the “Father of Pediatrics” and was a pioneer in ophthalmology.

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, born in the French colony of Guadeloupe, he was the son of a wealthy planter and an enslaved African woman. He was a champion fencer, violinist and classical composer. He is known as the first classical composer of African ancestry.

Bessie Coleman, an early American civil aviator. The first person of African American and Native American descent to hold a pilot’s license.

Charles Drew, an African-American physician and medical researcher. He made groundbreaking discoveries in blood transfusions and played a major role in the creation of the blood bank.

Rosalind Franklin, an English chemist whose work was essential to our understanding of DNA.

Percy Julian, an African-American doctor living under Jim Crow who was a pioneer in the pharmaceuticals industry.

Susanne La Flesche, the first Native-American woman to earn a medical degree in the United States.

Henrietta Lacks, an African-American woman whose cancer cells were used, without her permission, in medical research. Her cancer cells contributed to the development of the polio vaccine and other scientific landmarks.

Hedy Lamarr, an Austrian actor who immigrated to the United States. She created the modern precursor to Bluetooth technology.

Ada Lovelace, an English mathematician and writer often referred to as the first computer programmer.

Sybil Ludington, at the age of 16 she rode with Paul Revere during his famous ride to alert the Patriots that British troops were coming. She rode twice as far as he did that night.

Emily Warren Roebling, an American socialite, builder and businesswoman largely responsible for the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Bayard Rustin, an African-American Civil Rights activist. He was a close friend and advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Rustin's work was often overlooked and relegated to the shadows because he was openly gay.

Maria Tallchief, an Osage ballerina who became the first American Indian prima ballerina for the New York City Ballet and the first American ballerina to dance with the Paris Opera Ballet.

York, an enslaved African-American man forced by his enslaver William Lewis to go on the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Ocean. His work and temperament were crucial to the explorers' success.

Zitkala-Sa, a Yankton Sioux writer, musician and activist. She founded the National Council of American Indians.

