

African American Scientists, Inventors, and Contributors



In the 1890s, **Sarah Breedlove** developed a line of cosmetics for Black women, then renamed herself Madam C.J. Walker and became the first self-made Black female millionaire in America. The Madame C. J. Walker Company is still in business and doing very well.

Elijah McCoy saw the need for a safe and efficient way to lubricate steam locomotives, and invented the automatic drip oiler, which he patented in 1872. Other companies tried to copy McCoy's products, but if people wanted the best quality, they learned to ask for "the real McCoy" by name.



In the course of a long career, **Dr. Patricia E. Bath** invented a new device and method to remove cataracts. She also created a new discipline, Community Ophthalmology, which has saved the sight of thousands whose problems would have gone undiagnosed and untreated. Community Ophthalmology combines aspects of public health, community medicine, and clinical ophthalmology to offer primary eye care to underserved populations. It is now practiced worldwide. Dr. Bath died in 2019.

Rufus Stokes was one of the first experts and researchers to study the effects of industrial pollution on human lives. In 1968 he was granted a patent on an air-purification device to reduce the gas and ash content of powerplant smokestack emissions. The system benefited the respiratory health of people and also eased the health risks to plants and animals. A side-effect of reduced industrial stack emissions was the improved appearance and durability of buildings, cars, and objects exposed to outdoor pollution for lengthy periods. Dr. Stokes died in 1986 of mesothelioma, an asbestos-related disease probably caused by his work.



Henrietta Lacks was born Loretta Pleasant on August 1, 1920. When she was in the sixth grade, she dropped out of school to help support her family. By 1951 Henrietta Lacks was a 31-year-old African American mother of five, when she was admitted to the Johns Hopkins Hospital and was subsequently treated for cervical cancer.

It was observed that the biopsy cancer cells grew robustly, doubling every 20–24 hours, unlike other specimen, which died out. This was the first human cell line to reproduce successfully outside the body, which was a scientific achievement with profound future benefit to medical research. As was customary the culture was named after the first two letters of Henrietta Lacks' first and last names, He + La.

HeLa cells were successfully cloned in 1953. Since then, HeLa cells have "continually been used for research into cancer, AIDS, the effects of radiation and toxic substances, gene mapping, and countless other scientific pursuits." HeLa cells were used by Jonas Salk to test the first polio vaccine in the 1950s.

Neither Lacks nor her family gave permission to harvest the cells. Ms. Lacks' family did not learn about her "immortal cells" until more than 25 years after her death. Her family received no profits from the selling of HeLa cells.

Please contact the LOPC Racial Equity & Engagement team if you would like the sources.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

This month, the Racial Equity and Engagement team is working with worship in celebrating Black History Month. Throughout the month in worship, we will have music, prayers and readings from African American contributors. We hope that at this time we can acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of African Americans to the church, our society at large and to promote racial justice and inclusion. We hope to learn from the experiences of Black Christians and highlight the resilience and faith of Black people in the face of adversity, all while reinforcing the Christian belief that all people are created equal in God's image.

Please consider supporting these black-owned businesses near Lafayette, CA.:



Reve Bistro, Lafayette



Horn BBQ, Lafayette



Skin Soup, Lafayette



Cupkakin', Walnut Creek



Tru Sugaring & Skincare
Walnut Creek



Frickin' Chicken
Concord



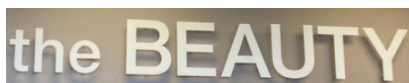
The Curl Studio
Walnut Creek



Mama Jannah's Kitchen
Concord



Vic's
Martinez



The Beauty Zone
Pleasant Hill



Smokin' Woods BBQ
Temescal, Oakland



Souley Vegan
Martinez



Full Belly Bakery
Montclair, Oakland



Spavia
Pleasant Hill



The Cajun Catch
Oakland



Y's Choice
Jack London Square
Oakland



Lois the Pie Queen
North Oakland



Sista's Soul Food Kafe
San Leandro



Blk Girls Green House
West Oakland



Concord Tap House
Oakland