

Information about famous people throughout history who have had a serious mental illness.

Abraham Lincoln

The revered sixteenth President of the United States suffered from severe and incapacitating depressions that occasionally led to thoughts of suicide, as documented in numerous biographies by Carl Sandburg.

Virginia Woolf

The British novelist who wrote *To the Lighthouse* and *Orlando* experienced the mood swings of bipolar disorder characterized by feverish periods of writing and weeks immersed in gloom. Her story is discussed in *The Dynamics of Creation* by Anthony Storr.

Lionel Aldridge

A defensive end for Vince Lombardi's legendary Green Bay Packers of the 1960's, Aldridge played in two Super Bowls. In the 1970's, he suffered from schizophrenia and was homeless for two and a half years. Until his death in 1998, he gave inspirational talks on his battle against paranoid schizophrenia. His story is the story of numerous newspaper articles.

Eugene O'Neill

The famous playwright, author of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and *Ah, Wilderness!*, suffered from clinical depression, as documented in *Eugene O'Neill* by Olivia E. Coolidge.

Ludwig van Beethoven

The brilliant composer experienced bipolar disorder, as documented in *The Key to Genius: Manic Depression and the Creative Life* by D. Jablow Hershman and Julian Lieb.

Gaetano Donizetti

The famous opera singer suffered from bipolar disorder, as documented in *Donizetti and the World Opera in Italy, Paris and Vienna in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* by Herbert Weinstock.

Robert Schumann

The "inspired poet of human suffering" experienced bipolar disorder, as discussed in *The Dynamics of Creation* by Anthony Storr.

Leo Tolstoy

Author of *War and Peace*, Tolstoy revealed the extent of his own mental illness in the memoir *Confession*. His experiences is also discussed in *The Dynamics of Creation* by Anthony Storr and *The Inner World of Mental Illness: A Series of First Person Accounts of What It Was Like* by Bert Kaplan.

Vaslov Nijinsky

The dancer's battle with schizophrenia is documented in his autobiography, *The Diary of Vaslov Nijinsky*.

John Keats

The renowned poet's mental illness is documented in *The Dynamics of Creation* by Anthony Storr and *The Broken Brain: The biological Revolution in Psychiatry* by Nancy Andreasen, M.D.

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Tennessee Williams

The playwright gave a personal account of his struggle with clinical depression in his own *Memoirs*. His experience is also documented in *Five O'Clock Angel: Letters of Tennessee Williams to Maria St. Just, 1948-1982*; *The Kindness of Strangers: The Life of Tennessee Williams* by Donald Spoto, and *Tennessee: Cry of the Heart* by Dotson.

Vincent Van Gogh

The celebrated artist's bipolar disorder is discussed in *The Key to Genius: Manic Depression and the Creative Life* by D. Jablow Hershman and Julian Lieb and *Dear Theo, The Autobiography of Van Gogh*.

Isaac Newton

The scientist's mental illness is discussed in *The Dynamics of Creation* by Anthony Storr and *The Key to Genius: Manic Depression and the Creative Life* by D. Jablow Hershman and Julian Lieb.

Ernest Hemingway

The Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist's suicidal depression is examined in *The True Gen: An Intimate Portrait of Ernest Hemingway* by Those Who Knew Him by Denis Brian.

Sylvia Plath

The poet and novelist ended her lifelong struggle with clinical depression by taking own life, as reported in *A Closer Look at Ariel: A Memory of Sylvia Plath* by Nancy Hunter-Steiner.

Michelangelo

The mental illness of one of the world's greatest artistic geniuses is discussed in *The Dynamics of Creation* by Anthony Storr.

Winston Churchill

"Had he been a stable and equable man, he could never have inspired the nation. In 1940, when all the odds were against Britain, a leader of sober judgment might well have concluded that we were finished," wrote Anthony Storr about Churchill's bipolar disorder in *Churchill's Black Dog, Kafka's Mice, and Other Phenomena of the Human Mind*.

Vivien Leigh

The *Gone with the Wind* star suffered from mental illness, as documented in *Vivien Leigh: A Biography* by Ann Edwards.

Jimmy Piersall

The baseball player for the Boston Red Sox who suffered from bipolar disorder detailed his experience in *The Truth Hurts*.

Patty Duke

The Academy Award-winning actress told of her bipolar disorder in her autobiography and made-for-TV movie *Call Me Anna* and *A Brilliant Madness: Living with Manic-Depressive Illness*, co-authored by Gloria Hochman.

Charles Dickens

One of the greatest authors in the English language suffered from clinical depression, as documented in *The Key to Genius: Manic Depression and the Creative Life* by D. Jablow Hershman and Julian Lieb, and *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph* by Edgar Johnson.

Source:

National Alliance on Mental Illness, www.nami.org