

# Mary McLeod Bethune



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This book belongs to:

*Mrs. Thompson*

## Young Mary

Mary McLeod was born in **Mayesville, South Carolina** in 1875. Mary's parents, Samuel and Patsy, and most other African Americans in Mayesville had been enslaved, but were free by the time Mary was born.



**Draw a compass next to the map.** Mary was born in South Carolina.  
South Carolina is in which region of the United States?

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In which direction would you travel to get from South Carolina to Georgia?

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Mary was not a slave, but she didn't have the same rights as white children either. African American children couldn't go to the same schools as white children, and there were no schools for African Americans.

Even though the McLeods were free, they still worked for their former owners on the plantation.



This is the cabin that Mary lived in when she was growing up.

## Mary and Miss Wilson

A woman named **Emma Wilson** wanted to fix that. She started a school in Mayesville for African American children. Mary thought of all the times she had been teased by white children because she couldn't read. She decided she would go to Miss Wilson's school, do her best, and learn all that she could.

The school did not even have its own building. Students met in a church where they sat on the hard church benches all day during their lessons. They didn't mind. Miss Wilson was a kind woman and they appreciated the opportunity to learn.



This is a school that is like the one Mary attended in Mayesville.

By the time Mary was a teenager, she was one of the best students in Miss Wilson's school. She taught her siblings to read. She read the Bible and newspapers to **illiterate** people in Mayesville.

Use context clues in the sentences above to infer the meaning of the word *illiterate*.

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## Mary Continues Her Education

Miss Wilson wanted Mary to have a chance to go to high school. She talked to Mary's parents about a school in North Carolina called **Scotia Seminary**. All of the students at Scotia were African American girls like Mary. Mary had the chance to go there for free, but she had to leave her home in Mayesville. Mary decided that continuing her education was worth leaving her home for a few years.



Mary was barely a teenager when she left her family and went to Scotia Seminary.

The whole town helped to wish Mary good-bye when she left. They made clothes for her and even went to the train station to wave to her. They were proud of Mary and proud to have her representing Mayesville.

Mary had many “firsts” as she traveled to and arrived at Scotia Seminary. She rode a train for the first time, went into a brick building for the first time, and used fancy silverware and tablecloths at dinner for the first time. Mary had to learn the fancy table manners that they used at her new school.



The students at Scotia worked together to take care of the school by doing chores. Mary was one of the best bakers in the school and she was also very good at doing laundry. She liked singing and playing music too. Mary was also a member of the debate team.

The other girls could count on Mary to listen when they were having problems. Mary became a leader at the school because of the kindness she showed to her classmates.

## College for Mary

In 1894, Mary finished school at Scotia and moved to **Chicago, Illinois** to go to college. Her college was called **Moody Bible Institute**. Mary studied religion and hoped to be a **missionary**. She wanted to travel around the world to teach people about her beliefs. After graduating, Mary had a very hard time finding work as a missionary. Churches did not want to send African American missionaries to Africa. Mary felt very discouraged.

Then, Mary realized something. There were plenty of children in the United States who needed her help. She found a job teaching and helping African American students in **Augusta, Georgia** at a school called the Haines Institute. A lady named Lucy Laney had started the school a few years earlier. She told Mary all about the work she had done to start the school.

How can you tell that education was very important to Mary McLeod Bethune?

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## Mary's Own School

Around 1904, Mary started planning her own school. She looked for the perfect found a town in Florida called **Daytona Beach**. Lots of African Americans were moving there, starting churches, clubs, and opening businesses. There were lots of African American children there too, but there were not enough schools.

When Mary started her school, she only had \$1.50. Luckily, people in the community raised money for her. They also donated things like food, clothes, and dishes. They volunteered their time to help build the school building.

In 1904, the school had only five students, but, by the second year, it had 250 students (mostly girls). The school also had night classes for adults who wanted to learn.



Over the next few years, Mary worked hard to grow and improve her school. She had to raise money to buy more land to build more school buildings, so she baked pies and sold them. She rode her bicycle all around asking churches and business to give money to the school. The school grew and grew. They added a barn and farm animals. They added new buildings and more classes. By 1931, the school had grown so large that it was a college.



MARY McLEOD BETHUNE, PRINCIPAL

In 1941, Mary's school became a four-year college. Today it is called **Bethune-Cookman College**. You can go there if you want after you graduate from high school.

## More Work for Mary

Mary did more than start a college. She also started a club for African American women. She knew that by working together they could make a powerful difference in the world around them. The women volunteered their time to teach cooking classes, take care of people, and raise money. In 1924, Mary became president of the club, but she was still not allowed to sit with white women when she went to meetings with them. When people of different races are kept separate from each other, it is called **segregation**.

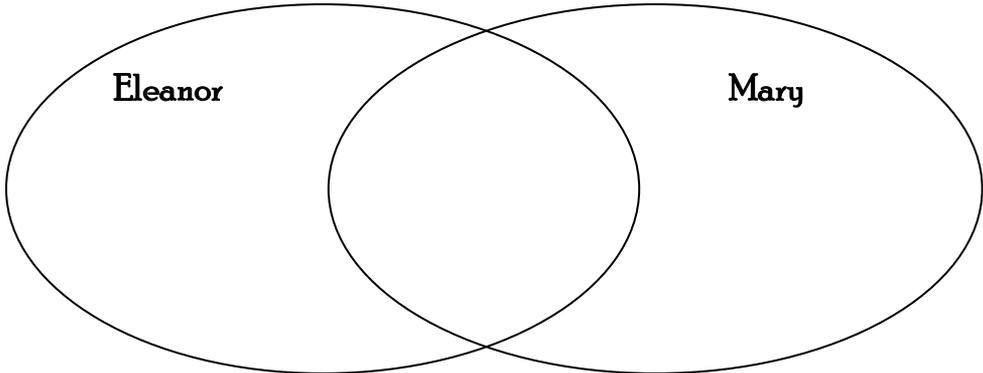
### Match the term to its definition.

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|-------------------|--|
| ___1. diligence   | a. unable to read  |
| ___2. segregation | b. someone who teaches others about their beliefs, often traveling around the world to do so |
| ___3. illiterate  | c. hard work towards a goal  |
| ___4. missionary  | d. when people are forced to separate based on race  |

Around the same time, the **Great Depression** started in the United States. President Roosevelt's **New Deal** was a plan meant to help Americans during the tough times of the Depression. One of the programs that the New Deal created was the **National Youth Administration**, or **NYA**. The NYA created jobs for teenagers so that they could help their families earn money.



Eleanor Roosevelt had met Mary at lots of meetings and she respected her work. She told President Franklin Roosevelt about Mary. Franklin hired Mary to work for the NYA. She made sure that the NYA helped African American teens as well as white teens.



Mary McLeod Bethune was proud of all of her hard work. She was proud of the students who graduated from her school. She was proud of the ladies who volunteered with her. She was proud of the teens who worked hard to help their families. She was proud of herself, and she was also proud to be an African American woman.



Mary being congratulated by President Harry S. Truman

How did Mary show respect for the authority of others?

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How did Mary show her diligence?

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## Awards and Legacy

Mary won lots of awards. The country of Haiti gave her the Medal of Honor and Merit in 1949. In 1952, she finally traveled to Africa. In the African country of Liberia, she received the Star of Africa Award. She was the first African American woman to have a statue in the park in Washington D.C.



Mary died in 1955, but her hard work lives on. Her school is over 100 years old and students still enter and graduate from her school every year.



Find the words from the text in the puzzle below.

Q	O	H	Z	W	D	U	C	B	J	D	N	D	Y	D
M	Q	V	W	N	N	M	B	Y	E	O	O	I	M	C
I	J	M	H	O	M	E	A	T	F	E	I	L	Q	I
M	I	S	S	I	O	N	A	R	Y	L	T	I	Z	V
G	E	L	E	X	I	R	E	A	Y	C	A	G	E	E
S	I	D	K	N	E	E	U	J	K	M	G	E	M	E
W	X	O	U	T	U	T	K	S	T	U	E	N	M	L
L	D	A	I	C	H	H	W	E	I	S	R	C	A	F
A	K	L	X	O	A	P	T	N	I	D	G	E	E	Y
X	L	D	R	C	Q	T	N	E	E	N	E	A	R	D
I	Y	I	K	X	M	T	I	J	B	D	S	Y	E	D
A	T	V	D	A	N	I	L	O	R	A	C	P	S	C
Y	W	B	Q	M	F	Q	A	W	N	S	O	U	T	H
R	W	C	W	H	F	U	W	D	G	W	A	W	A	Z
Q	L	J	E	X	H	S	N	W	R	F	G	G	E	Y

DILIGENCE  
EDUCATION  
FREE  
ILLITERATE  
MARY  
MCLEOD  
BETHUNE

AUTHORITY  
MISSIONARY  
SEGREGATION  
SOUTH  
CAROLINA  
EMMA  
WILSON

