

Mary Seacole

Who Was Mary Seacole?

Mary was born in Jamaica in 1805 to her Jamaican mother and her Scottish father. She was known as Mary Grant. Her father had visited Jamaica due to being in the British army. Her mother was a nurse and a healer, using many herbal remedies to treat patients. Her mother ran a healing house also known as Blundell Hall.



In 1836, Mary married a man called Edwin Seacole. He died eight years later.

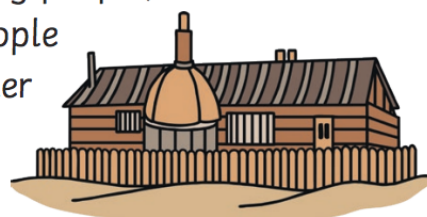
Mary's Life

During her early life, Mary assisted her mother at Blundell Hall. She learnt how to treat ill people and on occasions was asked to assist at the British Army Hospital. In 1843, Blundell Hall burned down and had to be replaced. This was followed by the tragedy of her mother's death. Over the years, she treated many illnesses including cholera, which killed over 32,000 Jamaicans.

Why Is She Remembered?

Most famously, Mary is known for her work during the Crimean War. In 1853, the war began and disease spread immediately. Mary sailed to England to ask to be sent to the Crimea, along with other nurses. At the time, people who were not white were treated unfairly. Mary was turned away because she was black. Using her own funds, she sailed to the Crimea and opened an establishment called 'The British Hotel'. She tended to sick and injured British soldiers and became known as Mother Seacole due to her hospitality. During battles, it is thought that she distributed food, clothing and blankets.

Post war, Mary was awarded a medal of bravery. After her death, Mary was forgotten for almost one hundred years. Many people, including Jamaican nurses, fought to remind people of her. They named a building in Jamaica after her and in 2016, a statue was erected in London.



Questions

1. Why was Mary Seacole known by another name when she born?

2. Why do you think Mary Seacole is most famously known for her work during the Crimean War?

3. When the Crimean War began, why do you think disease spread quickly?

4. Give two reasons why Mary Seacole was known as 'Mother Seacole'.

5. What does the word **heroine** mean and why do you think Mary Seacole was known as one?

6. Why do you think a statue of Mary was erected?
