

Why was Mary Seacole not so well known as Florence Nightingale?

MD 2006



For a long time Mary Seacole was almost forgotten but **why** was Mary Seacole forgotten while Florence Nightingale was remembered?

They were very similar.



They both went out to the Crimea to help nurse soldiers.

Both women had to fight very hard to be able to do what they wanted to do: to be nurses and go to the Crimea.

Who wanted to stop Florence Nightingale from nursing soldiers in the Crimean War? Why?

Why do you think it was so hard for Mary Seacole to be accepted and allowed to go to help the soldiers? What did she do in the end?



Do you think it would be the same if they had lived now?



Florence Nightingale wrote a book called "Notes on Nursing" to help others learn how to be nurses.



Mary Seacole wrote a book too. Her book was called "The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands". It was about her life and travels not about how to be a good nurse.



Florence Nightingale had important friends.



Mary Seacole also had important friends.

But they were different too.



Mary Seacole was black and at that time many thought that black people weren't as good as white people.



Florence Nightingale was white so everyone accepted her.

Why do you think Florence was remembered more than Mary?



So how was Mary Seacole rediscovered?



In 1973 a British nurse bought an old copy of Mary's book in a second hand bookshop. She did some detective work and found Mary's forgotten grave in a London cemetery. She organised the restoration of the grave and a special ceremony was held to honour her. People began to hear about Mary and she became famous once again.

In 1981, one hundred years after her death, a special service was held to mark the centenary of her death.

In 1984 'The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands' was reprinted so that Mary's story could be read by even more people.



Mary Seacole voted greatest Black Briton



Black Briton voted the greatest Black Briton in 2004. Mary Seacole was named as the greatest Black Briton in a poll conducted by the BBC. She was named as the greatest Black Briton in a poll conducted by the BBC. She was named as the greatest Black Briton in a poll conducted by the BBC.

And of course, as you already know, she was voted the Greatest Black Briton in 2004.

Whatever the reasons for forgetting about her, Mary Seacole isn't going to be forgotten again.

Do you know the answers to these questions?
What words do you think describe Mary Seacole?
What tells you that she liked adventure?
Why do you think she wanted to go to the Crimea?
Why was it very difficult for her to be taken seriously?
Why were people sometimes rude to her?
Why were many soldiers so grateful to her?

