

Great Jamaicans of the past...

Mary Seacole

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Mary Seacole was called the Florence Nightingale of Jamaica. She was born in Kingston in 1805. Her father was a Scottish soldier living in Jamaica. Mary's mother cared for sick soldiers in a boarding house on East Street.

sickly person and died after returning to Kingston. Mary's mother died afterwards. In 1843, Mary's house was burnt down in a serious fire which broke out. She, however rebuilt the house. It was used as a boarding house and home for

England. Many Jamaican soldiers were sent to fight in what was known as the Crimean War. Mary wanted to go and help nurse the wounded soldiers but she was not allowed to do. But she was not to be stopped.



On her way to Russia she met Florence Nightingale who was also nursing soldiers. While in Russia Mary started a hotel for army officers and soldiers. She earned a living from running the hotel and managed to find time to care for the wounded soldiers.

As a child, Mary lived with an old woman for a while. The woman was very good to her and treated her like one of her own grandchildren. From an early age, Mary liked nursing and helped her mother care for the sick from she was 12 years old.

sick army officers. Mary became active in nursing the sick in 1850 after Cholera broke out in Jamaica. She continued nursing the sick when she went to Panama to visit her brother. She went on to Cuba after leaving Panama and helped to nurse those who had cholera there. She became known as "the yellow woman from Jamaica with the cholera medicine."

After the war ended, Mary had to close the hotel as it was no longer necessary. But she had no money. However, she got enough to return to England.

Mary liked to travel and went to England while she was a young girl. She spent two years there then returned to Jamaica. She married John Seacole later and went to live in Black River where they operated a shop. Mr. Seacole was a

In 1853 she returned to Jamaica after Yellow Fever broke out here. She wanted to help. She later returned to Panama and then on to

Mary Seacole died in 1881 in England. Many countries honoured her for her work during the war. One of the female halls at the UWI has been named after her. The headquarters for the Nurses Association of Jamaica is called "The Mary Seacole House". At the Kingston Public Hospital (KPH) a medical ward was named in her honour.