

Kuumba Korner

Mary McLeod 'crossed many rivers'

by Dorothy Word

"Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?" the lyrics ask. Well, Mary McLeod lived her life "crossing rivers." First of all, Mary McLeod literally dreamed of rivers! Several times during her lifetime, while asleep she dreamed of deep, wide, swiftly-moving rivers that she had to cross. When she awoke, she understood that her dreams always meant that she would have tremendous challenges to face, huge problems to solve.

Born-free in 1875 to parents who had been slaves, McLeod's life of "crossing the river" from the cotton field to the field of education, proved to be as deep, wide and swiftly-moving as the river she dreamed. At age nine, McLeod began her education-journey in



Miss Wilson's one-room school in Mayesville, South Carolina. Next, she attended

Scotia Seminary in Concord, North Carolina for seven years. In 1893, she went on to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Her heart's desire was to become a missionary to Africa! But, her heart was broken by the Mission Board informing her that African Americans were not allowed to be missionaries to Africa.

Bouncing back from that bitter disappointment, Mary McLeod returned home to Mayesville to begin her missionary work in her own country. Within a few days, she was teaching in Miss Wilson's School, the very school where she began her education as an excited nine-year-old. But after a year, she transferred to Haines Normal Institute in Augusta, Georgia. Then, in another year, she transferred to Kindrell Institute in Sumter, South Carolina.

(To Be Continued)

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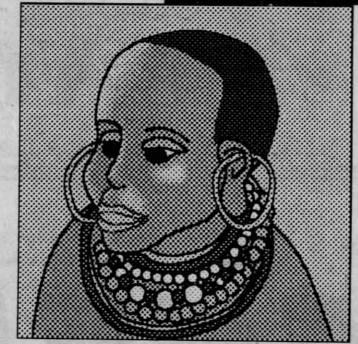
Mary McLeon Bethune wore many hats

by Dorothy Word

Part II

How many hats can one woman wear? Mary McLeod Bethune wore many! Some of which were mother, wife, administrator, teacher, fund raiser and founder of a school and a hospital.

In 1898, McLeon married Albertus Bethune and in 1899, a son, Albert, was born. When Albert was nine months old, the Bethunes moved to Palatka, Florida, where Mrs. Bethune taught in a mission school. News reached her that African American children in Daytona, Fla., had no school to attend. She knew



her next move would be to Daytona—to start a school of her own!

A natural-born fund raiser, she knew she needed wealthy, generous people to help start and maintain a school. The rich and famous who were willing to invest in Mrs. Bethune's school were: Oil magnate John D. Rockefeller; industrialist Henry J. Kaiser, and James G. Gamble of Proctor & Gamble, to name a few.

In 1904, Mrs. Bethune opened the Daytona Educational and Industrial School for Negro Girls in her home on Oak Street. By 1905, there were 100 students and larger quarters were needed. So, in 1906, the school was moved from her home to Faith Hall.

In 1911, Mrs. Bethune learned that African Americans were not admitted to the local hospital. Her reaction to this mean-spirited practice was to turn the small cottage next to Faith Hall into a two-bed hospital with African America, Dr. T.A. Adams, in charge. Later, there would be a two-story, 26-bed hospital!