LIVES OF SIGNIFCANT INDIVUDALS: MARY SEACOLE & FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE (Y2)

Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale was a famous British nurse who lived between 1820 and 1910. She helped to make hospitals cleaner, safer places, and wrote books about how to be a good nurse. People often think of her as the 'founder of modern nursing.' Lots of what we know today about how to keep hospitals clean and organised places is due to the hard work and research of Florence Nightingale. Because of her, thousands (possibly even millions) of lives have been saved - she found ways to stop many infections and diseases from spreading. She also helped wounded soldiers in the Crimean War.

A photograph of Florence Nightingale from 1860.

Mary Seacole

Mary Seacole was a British-Jamaican lady who helped many people who were injured or dying in war. As a black woman at the time, she faced unfairness and discrimination when she tried to volunteer to be a nurse during the Crimean War (1854-56). When the British turned down her offer of help, she decided that she would go to Crimea herself. She set up the 'British Hotel', a place near the frontline to help to provide comfort and support to those in the army. Every day, she rode towards the battle front to give medical support to those who were injured. She is remembered as a hero – in 2004 she was voted number 1 in a poll of the Greatest Black Britons.

A portrait of Mary Seacole from around 1869.

Times in Her Life (Florence Nightingale)

Early Life
She was born in Florence in Tuscany, Italy. She was named after the city of her birth. She was from a wealthy family, who moved back to Hampshire, England in 1821 (when Florence was 11). Her family also had a large estate at Lea Hurst in Derbyshire.

Young Adulthood
In 1838, Florence's father took her on a tour around Europe. Here, she met Mary Clarke, who she became friends with for 40 years. Mary showed Florence that women could be equal to men. Florence decided to devote her life to nursing.
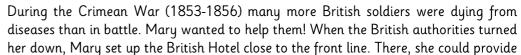
The Crimean War
During the Crimean War (1853-1856) Nightingale helped to treat wounded soldiers. She also made sure that hospitals were clean places for the soldiers to recover. She became known as the 'Lady with the Lamp' as she would work all night to make sure that the soldiers were treated well, with water and warm blankets. She had seen that lots of soldiers die of diseases like typhus and cholera. She worked to improve their nutrition and care to stop diseases and illnesses from developing.

The Nightingale Fund
The Nightingale Fund was set up to reward all of Florence Nightingale's hard work. In 1860, Nightingale used some of this money to set up the Nightingale Training School at St. Thomas' Hospital.

Later Life
In 1883, Nightingale met Queen Victoria, who awarded her the Royal Red Cross Medal for her work. She died in her sleep in 1910, aged 90 years old.

Times in Her Life (Mary Seacole)

Early Life
She was born Mary Jane Grant in Kingston, Jamaica to a Jamaican mother and Scottish father. Her mother ran one of the top hotels in Kingston, and also worked as a healer. She passed her knowledge to Mary. Mary used to practice her remedies on her dolls and toys!

Marriage and Panama Hotel
Mary married Edwin Seacole in 1836. He was a sickly man, and so she spent a lot of time nursing him. At the age of 45 she opened a hotel in Panama. There was an outbreak of cholera there, and Mary's remedies worked wonders!

The Crimean War
During the Crimean War (1853-1856) many more British soldiers were dying from diseases than in battle. Mary wanted to help them! When the British authorities turned her down, Mary set up the British Hotel close to the front line. There, she could provide them with comforts, and use it as a base for her nursing practice. In the hotel there was a restaurant and a general store. Mary used all of the profits that she made to find buying medicines to help the stricken soldiers. She also rode to the battlefields to help the soldiers in battle.

Popularity and Funding
Mary returned to London without much money – she had used it all to help people. However, the soldiers that she had helped decided to raise money for her. They had several events, including big galas to help Mary have money to live off.
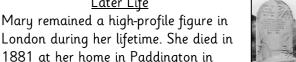
Later Life
Mary remained a high-profile figure in London during her lifetime. She died in 1881 at her home in Paddington in London. She would have been about 76 years old. She is buried in Kensal Green, London.

Florence Nightingale Timeline

12th May 1820: Born in Florence, Italy.	
1844: Tells everyone that she wants to be a nurse.	
1851: Studied nursing at Kaiserwerth, Germany.	
1853-1856: Nightingale served during the Crimean War.	
1856: Asked Queen Victoria to investigate hospital conditions	
1859: Published her 'Notes on Nursing' book.	
9th July 1860: Opened the Nightingale Training School at St. Thomas' Hospital.	
1883: Awarded the Royal Red Cross	
1901: Became completely blind.	
13th August 1910: Died in London, in her sleep.	

Mary Seacole Timeline

1805: Was born in Kingston, Jamaica.	
1822: Mary visits England for the first time.	
1830: 'People of colour' granted equal rights in Jamaica.	
1836: Mary marries Edwin Horatio Hamilton Seacole.	
1851: Moves to Panama and opens a hotel.	
1854: Start of Crimean War, Mary wants to volunteer.	
1855: Sets up British Hotel only 4 miles from the front line.	
1856: The Crimean War ends and Mary returns home.	
1857: 80,000 people raise money for Mary.	
1867: Mary is given a charity fund as a pension.	
1881: Mary dies in London.	