



Mary Ann Shadd House in Washington, D.C.  
where she lived at the end of her life

## Who Is Mary Ann Shadd?

Mary Ann Shadd was born in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1823. Her father worked for an abolitionist (anti-slavery) newspaper and was a member of the [Underground Railroad](#), helping escaped slaves.

Mary Ann followed in her father's footsteps. Along with her abolitionist activities, she started a newspaper and wrote many articles and reports.

After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 that made it difficult to help escaped slaves, the Shadd family moved to Canada. Mary Ann continued her work from there and encouraged other African Americans to cross the border to freedom.

It was in Canada that Mary Ann Shadd started a newspaper called *The Provincial Freeman*, a weekly paper for African Americans. Not only was Shadd one of the first female journalists in Canada, she was the first Black woman in North America to publish a newspaper. Shadd did not take credit for the articles she wrote. For a long time, she hid the fact that the paper was run by a woman.

Education was also important to Shadd. As well as starting the newspaper, she set up a school that was open to children of all races. She taught there as well.

Soon after Mary Ann's husband, Thomas Cary, died in 1860, the Civil War began. Mary Ann returned to the United States to help the Union. She encouraged African Americans to join the fight against the Confederacy and against slavery.

After the war, Mary Ann developed an interest in the law. In 1883, at the age of 60, she became the second African American woman in the United States to earn a law degree.

Mary Ann Shadd Cary died in 1893 in Washington, D.C. She has been recognized as an important civil rights figure in both Canada and the United States.

### Questions for "Who Is Mary Ann Shadd?"

1. When was Mary Ann Shadd born?  
1823    1850    1860
2. When did Mary Ann Shadd die?  
1860    1883    1893
3. Where did Mary Ann Shadd Cary die?  
Wilmington, Delaware    Toronto, Canada    Washington, D.C.
4. Where did Mary Ann live when she was growing up?  
Canada    Delaware    Washington
5. How old was Mary Ann Shadd when she got her law degree?  
30    45    60
6. What was Mary Ann's husband's name?  
Thomas Cary    Thomas Shad    Cary Washington
7. Where was the school that Mary Ann Shadd set up?  
Canada    Delaware    Washington
8. Mary Ann Shadd was the first black female newspaper editor in North America.  
True    False    It doesn't say in the story.
9. Mary Ann Shadd was the first black woman to get a law degree.  
True    False    It doesn't say in the story.
10. What is an abolitionist?  
someone who fought for women's rights  
someone against free education  
someone who fought to end slavery
11. Why did the Shadd family move to Canada in 1850?  
Mr. Shadd got a teaching job there.  
They preferred the cooler weather.  
It was easier to help slaves from there.
12. Why did Mary Ann return to the United States in the 1860s?  
to go to law school  
to help the Union in the Civil War  
to get married