

## B. Mary Royer

On 30 August 1881 Mary Buch Royer, better known as B. Mary Royer, was born.<sup>1</sup> She was raised by her grandmother after her mother, Laura Buch Royer, died when she was seventeen months old.<sup>2</sup> When she was fourteen years old she moved to Richland, Pennsylvania to live with her aunt and uncle.<sup>3</sup> Her devotion for the church began when her Aunt Emma Buch urged her toward service.<sup>4</sup> From her baptism on Christmas 1897 until her death fifty-four years later, Royer remained faithful to God.<sup>5</sup>

Royer wished for the advantages she was not granted in a liberal education and she sought higher education.<sup>6</sup> She began this by taking a short Bible term at Juniata College, after her time here, she worked at the Brethren Publishing House in Elgin.<sup>7</sup> Several years later, she took another Bible course, this time at Elizabethtown College.<sup>8</sup> After graduation, she continued to New York City to attend the Bible Teachers Training School.<sup>9</sup> She used her education to teach Bible and English courses at Hebron Seminary in Nokesville, Virginia for two years.<sup>10</sup> She then moved on to Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan to take nurses training in preparation for her mission trips to India.<sup>11</sup>

In the fall of 1913, age thirty-two Royer left for Marathi, India where, due to the emersion in the culture, she was able to learn to fluently speak the native language.<sup>12</sup> Royer taught evangelism to girls and women throughout the villages in the Dahanu area.<sup>13</sup> She lived in a native house among the villagers and formed a bond with the women around her through their close proximity.<sup>14</sup> A few years later, Royer was temporarily asked to assist with Dr. Nickey's medical work at Dahanu Road until a nurse was available.<sup>15</sup>

Following her work with Dr. Nickey, she returned to evangelistic teaching and was transferred to the girls school in Ahwa and Dahanu.<sup>16</sup> She provided counsel and guidance at these schools, and actually lived with some of her students.<sup>17</sup> Royer was not granted any conveniences by living in the jungle which cause her to have health difficulties.<sup>18</sup> These included, several "attacks of malarial fever" and limitations caused by a weakened heart.<sup>19</sup> Despite this, she never complained, rather she thanked her Lord for the opportunities He granted her.<sup>20</sup>

At the end of her time in India, Royer was sixty-six years old, served four terms, was elected twice to represent the Second District of India on the Standing Committee, although she only served once.<sup>21</sup> During her thirty-three years as a missionary she was supported by her home church in Richland, which provided her with monetary assistance.<sup>22</sup> Her retirement from missionary work did not stop her from being active in her home

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<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission; Pennsylvania, USA; Certificate Number Range: 103051-105600.

<sup>2</sup> Church of the Brethren, History of the Church of the Brethren: Eastern Pennsylvania, 1915-1965, (Lancaster, PA: Forry and Hacker, 1965), 340.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 340.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 340.

<sup>5</sup> Chet Williamson, *Uniting Work and Spirit: A Centennial History of Elizabethtown College*, (Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown College Press, 2001), 216.; Church of the Brethren, 340. Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission.

<sup>6</sup> Church of the Brethren, 340.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 340.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 340.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 340.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 340.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 340.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 340.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 340.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 341.

congregation.<sup>23</sup> From her home she taught both Sunday School and Gospel until the day she died.<sup>24</sup> On 6 December 1951, Royer died, unmarried, peacefully in her home in Richland.<sup>25</sup> There was a large attendance to her funeral service which was led by Pastor Ray Kurtz.<sup>26</sup> Attendees included twenty ministers from her district who spoke very highly of her.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 341.