

Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole Timeline

Nursing, Health Care and Other Occupations

This Timeline on Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale has been prepared especially for teachers. Existing print and internet resources (on Seacole especially) are highly defective, conveying now commonly accepted myths, entirely lacking in primary source documentation, and which contradict Seacole's own engaging memoir *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands*.

Many sources compare Seacole and Nightingale's life and work, as if they were at all similar. They only met for about 5 minutes (during the Crimean War) and played very different roles in it. Seacole, contrary to many books for children, journal articles and websites, ran a restaurant/bar/store/takeaway/catering service for officers during the war, not a hospital or clinic.

This Timeline can serve as a checklist against unreliable sources. It is also available as [a PDF download](#) (6 pages).

MARY SEACOLE	FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE
1805: Seacole born in Kingston, Jamaica	
	1820: Nightingale born in Florence, Italy
1820s: Seacole makes two visits to England; on second sells Jamaican pickles and preserves	
1836: Marries Edwin Seacole; together run store in Black River; 'nurses' him and patroness in dying days, no specifics given	1837: Nightingale called to service, wants to nurse, family does not allow her
1843: Seacole's mother's boarding house destroyed by fire, rebuilt	1840s: Nightingale visits workhouse infirmaries which 'broke the visitor's heart'
1850: Seacole travels to Panama; supervises food/clothing production for sale at brother's hotel/store; opens own store/restaurant; cholera epidemic but no doctor--she treats patients, claims some cures, uses lead acetate	1850: Nightingale's first visit to Kaiserswerth Deaconess Institution, Germany
	1851: Nightingale nurses three months at Kaiserswerth
	1852: Seeks hospital experience in Dublin but hospital closed for renovations
1853: Seacole in Jamaica; helps in yellow fever epidemic, no cure available; cares for dying grandmother at her home	1853: Nightingale nurses three months in Paris hospitals 1853-54 Nightingale nurses at and directs Establishment for Gentlewomen During Illness, Harley St.
1854: Seacole returns to Panama, invests in gold mine, prospects; in September leaves for London to attend to gold stocks, unsuccessful end November/early Dec 1854: starts applying in	21 Oct 1854: Nightingale leaves for Crimean War with 38 nurses 5 Nov 1854: arrives at Barrack Hospital; does hands-on work, supervises nursing at several

<p>person to be 'army assistant,' does not submit application to be a nurse; reports rejection; with business partner plans to open 'mess table and comfortable quarters' for convalescent officers</p>	<p>hospitals; promotes soldiers' welfare/ nutrition; reports bad conditions to government 14 Nov 1854: sinking of ship with medicine and winter gear: Nightingale purchases new supplies with Times fund almoner Dec 1854: on arrival of 2nd group of nurses FN organizes places for them</p>
<p>Feb 1855: Seacole departs for Crimea 8 Mar 1855: arrives at Scutari, meets Nightingale, brief conversation, gets bed for night Mar 1855: Seacole arrives in Crimea; for three to four weeks provides tea and lemonade at wharf for soldiers awaiting transport; opens 'Mrs Seacole's hut' at Kadikoi, for food, drink and catering for officers, with a 'canteen for soldiery' 18 Jun 1855: Seacole sells two mule-loads of food and drink to spectators at Cathcart's Hill watching first Redan assault, assists with first aid post-battle 16 Aug 1855: Seacole sells food and drink at Battle of Tchernaya, assists with first aid post-battle; takes buttons off coats of dead Russian soldiers 8 Sep 1855: Seacole sells food and drink to spectators at second Redan assault; assists with first aid post-battle; accepts loot stolen by French soldiers from Russian churches 9 Sep 1855: Seacole borrows mules for catering; with friends, visits deserted Sebastopol Sep 1855-Apr 1856: Seacole caters for excursions, expands business during peace negotiations</p>	<p>Jan/Feb 1855: serious overcrowding at Scutari Barrack Hospital and rising death rates ; new hospitals opened Mar 1855: Sanitary Commission arrives; Nightingale begins collaboration with Dr Sutherland May 1855: Nightingale's first trip to Crimean hospitals; falls ill of 'Crimean fever,' recovers; convalesces, returns to Scutari 8 Oct 1855: Nightingale makes second visit to establish nursing in Crimean hospitals 21 Nov 1855: Nightingale returns to Scutari on outbreak of cholera there; nurses worst cases and much night nursing Over winter: continues nursing and supervision; writes letters to families on behalf of soldiers, providing information on last care; continues to write Sidney Herbert on need for reforms</p>
<p>Apr 1856: troops/officers depart for England on signing of peace treaty 30 Mar; Seacole's business fails Jun 1856: Seacole attends investiture for the 'Order of the Bath'; sends a cake to officers Jul 1856: Seacole returns to England; feted at dinners and public events; briefly runs store at Aldershot 8 Nov 1856: Seacole attends first bankruptcy court hearing where she wears medals for the first time; fund raising for her begins</p>	<p>Mar-May 1856: Nightingale makes third visit to Crimea; establishes nursing at Land Transport Corps hospital; in Apr made superintendent of all Crimean hospital nursing 28 Jul 1856: Nightingale leaves Scutari on departure of last soldiers; 7 Aug 1856: Nightingale arrives back in London Sep-Oct 1856: Nightingale visits queen at Balmoral Castle; meets Lord Panmure, secretary for war; agrees to write 'confidential' account of war; starts statistical work</p>
<p>17 Jan 1857: bankruptcy certificate granted for Seacole and Day; Early Jul: Seacole publishes <i>Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in many Lands</i> 27 Jul 1857: Surrey Gardens festival in Seacole's honour begins, but proceeds meagre Later in year, Dutch translation of <i>Wonderful Adventures</i> appears</p>	<p>1857: Nightingale works on own reports and evidence to Royal Commission on the war; advises on nursing in the Royal Navy</p>
<p>1858: Seacole takes ship to Antwerp (purpose of trip not known); French translation of <i>Wonderful Adventures</i> appears</p>	<p>1858: Nightingale publishes 'Notes on the Health of the British Army, Subsidiary Notes [on] the Introduction of Female Nursing into Military</p>

	Hospitals'; sends first papers on hospital reform to the National Association for the Promotion of Science
1859: Henry Weekes makes sculpture of Seacole wearing medals (now at Getty Centre, Los Angeles) Oct 1859: Seacole departs for Jamaica on the Shannon arriving Oct 13	1859: Nightingale publishes <i>A Contribution to the Sanitary History of the British Army</i> ; publishes expanded <i>Notes on Hospitals</i>
	Jan 1860: Nightingale publishes 'Notes on Nursing: What It Is, and What It Is Not' Jun 1860: Nightingale School of Nursing opens at St Thomas' Hospital
	1861: Nightingale Ward and midwifery training open at King's College, London; Nightingale starts work on trained nursing at Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley; publishes 'Notes on Nursing for the Labouring Classes'; sends advice on nursing/hospitals to U.S. government for Civil War; starts research on health conditions in India; Census entry: 'formerly hospital matron'
	1862: Nightingale liaises on nursing in Baden; works on India royal commission; advises on British Army hospitals
1863: Seacole visits Panama	1863: Nightingale gives evidence to Royal Commission on India; publishes 'How People May Live and Not Die in India'
	1864: Nightingale starts work on workhouse infirmary reforms; articulates principle of quality hospital care regardless of ability to pay; advises British delegation to Geneva Convention
Oct 1865: Seacole returns to England from Jamaica	1865: first trained nursing at a workhouse begins at Liverpool; publishes 'Suggestions for a System of Nursing for Hospitals in India'; Nightingale contributes introduction to Rathbone, <i>Organization of Nursing</i>
Aug 1866: Seacole donates 100 bottles of anti-cholera medicine and 100 boxes of pills to Lord Mayor's Cholera Fund (ingredients unknown)	1866: Nightingale starts work on nurses for Australia; extends workhouse nursing to London; advises on trained nursing in India
Jan 1867: fundraising begins, which supports Seacole for the rest of her life	1867: Nightingale writes brief for Parliamentary committee on establishing nursing in Workhouse Infirmarys in London
	1868: Nightingale nurses begin work in Sydney, Australia; Nightingale publishes 'Una and the Lion' on death of Agnes Jones of Liverpool Workhouse Infirmary; first work on trained nurses for St Pancras Workhouse Infirmary Hospital

1869: Challen paints portrait of Seacole wearing three medals (now at National Portrait Gallery, London)	1869: Nightingale works on nurses' housing at Netley; works on Liverpool Workhouse nursing; analyzes data on maternal mortality at King's College
	1870: Nightingale sends public letters to workhouse nurses; works on relief assistance for Franco-Prussian War; letter on cholera published in <i>The Lancet</i>
Apr 1871: Census entry, Seacole living in Paddington, London, occupation 'annuitant' Jul 1871: Gleichen terracotta bust of Seacole with four medals (now at Institute of Jamaica)	1871: Nightingale census entry: 'director of Nightingale nurses'; move of Nightingale School to new St Thomas' Hospital; training school at St Pancras Workhouse Infirmary begins; publishes 'Introductory Notes on Lying-in Institutions'; awarded Bronze Cross of French aid society
	1872: Nightingale's first 'address' to nurses and probationers; advises on lectures for nurses at St Thomas'; trained nursing begins at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary
1873: carte de visite printed, with photograph of Seacole wearing three medals, Maull & Co.	1873: Nightingale works on St Thomas' curriculum and library for nurses; publishes 'Life or Death in India'; three American nurse training schools open based on Nightingale principles
	1874: Nightingale begins work to send nurses to Montreal; works on establishing district nursing agency
	1875: Nightingale works on army nursing; meets with nurses for Montreal; works on district nursing in Liverpool
	1876: Nightingale begins mentoring matron of St Mary's Hospital, Paddington; Nightingale Fund begins supporting district nurse training
	1877: Nightingale mentors matron at Addenbrooke's, Cambridge; works on extending district nursing; publishes 'The Indian Famine'
	1878: Nightingale works on nurses for: Lincoln Infirmary, St Bart's (London), Herbert Hospital, Belfast and Kent; publishes 'The People of India'
	1879: Nightingale gets inquiry started on abuses in nursing at Buxton Hospital; advises on nursing in Austria; works on sending nurses to Anglo-Zulu War; publishes 'Woman Slavery in Natal,' in <i>Aborigines' Friend</i>
	1880: Nightingale mentors Manchester matron; advises on army nursing in Southern Africa, workhouse infirmary nursing and district nursing
Apr 1881: Census entry, Seacole living in St Marylebone, occupation 'independent' 14 May 1881: death of Mary Seacole	1881: Census entry: 'director of Nightingale Fund for training hospital nurses'; advises on Metropolitan and National Nursing Association

Last Decades of Nightingale's Work

1882: Nightingale works on nursing in Westminster Hospital, London, on nursing in India; organizes nurses for Egyptian Campaign
1883: Nightingale works on cholera in Egypt; nursing at Netley; plans for Nurses' Home, St Marylebone Workhouse Infirmary
1884: Nightingale works on nurse training for Berlin; assists matron under investigation at St Mary's; Nurses' Home at St Marylebone Workhouse Infirmary opens
1885: Nightingale works on nursing for new Egyptian Campaign and for Belfast Children's Hospital and Union Infirmary, Belfast
1886: Nightingale works on nursing for Northern Hospital, Liverpool, for India and Herbert Hospital; publishes two articles in Quain, <i>Dictionary of Medicine</i> ; Jubilee Fund for District Nursing established
1887: Nightingale works on selection and mentoring of new matrons at St Thomas' and Edinburgh Royal Infirmary; promotes nursing and health in home in India
1888: Nightingale works on clinical lectures for probationers, on district nursing for Scotland, midwifery nurse training, army nursing in India; getting nurses for Gordon Boys' Home; opposes proposal for state registration of nurses
1889: Nightingale begins mentoring matrons of London Hospital and Birmingham Workhouse Infirmary; advises on nursing for London fever hospitals; assists matron and nurses going to Argentina
1890: appointment of new matron at St Thomas'; Nightingale writes introduction to Rathbone, <i>Sketch of the History and Progress of District Nursing</i> ; advises on nursing in Baden and New Zealand
1891: Nightingale meets with Indian delegates to hygiene congress; publishes 'Sanitation in India'; Census entry: 'director of Nightingale Fund Training School for Nurses'
1892: Nightingale works on district nursing in England and Scotland; mentors matron for Consumption Hospital; works on midwifery nursing; publishes 'The Reform of Sick Nursing and the Late Mrs Wardroper' in <i>British Medical Journal</i> ; publishes on hospitals in Chambers's Encyclopaedia
1893: Nightingale meets with American nursing leaders Isabel Hampton and Louise Darche; assists matron Flora Masson under investigation at Radcliffe Infirmary
1894: Nightingale begins work on nurse training for Italy; publishes revised articles in Quain, <i>Dictionary of Medicine</i>
1895: Nightingale writes fundraising letter for St Thomas' Hospital; works with new medical instructor at St Thomas' training school; begins work on trained nursing in Boston; works on nursing for Bolton Workhouse Infirmary
1896: Nightingale works on nurse training for Finland; circulates information on Finnish aseptic procedures; advises on telephones and bells at St Thomas'; works on trained nursing for Irish workhouses and for Calcutta; mentors matron of City of Dublin Hospital; publishes letter on district nursing
1897: Nightingale works on nursing at London Hospital; assists matron at Edinburgh under investigation; advises nurses departing for Hong Kong and India
1898: Nightingale tries to establish district nursing in Canada; does last work on health visitors; holds last meetings with St Thomas' nurses; makes last notes on antiseptic procedures
1899: Nightingale meets with matron of a New York hospital; meets with nursing leaders from Canada, U.S. and New Zealand
1900: Nightingale holds last meetings with matrons of St Marylebone Workhouse Infirmary and London Hospital; advises on nursing for Boer War; sends last 'address' (of fourteen) to nurses

1901: Nightingale sends public letter on district nursing; Census entry: 'living on own means'
1902: Nightingale holds last meeting with matron of St Thomas' Hospital
1903: Nightingale sends letter on district nursing to Australia
1904: Has last meeting with a Kaiserswerth deaconess; sends last greetings to Australian nurses
1905: Nightingale sends last letter to nurses at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary
1906: Nightingale meets with a midwife from Canada
1907: King confers Order of Merit on Nightingale; International Red Cross meeting recognizes her influence
1908: Nightingale sends last greetings to nurses and last survivors of the charge of the Light Brigade; City of London confers Freedom of City on Nightingale
1909: holds last meeting with former matron Angelique-Lucille Pringle
1910: new building of Hospital for Gentlewomen opens; first Italian training school based on Nightingale principles opens in Rome
13 Aug 1910: Nightingale dies at home in London