

..... BERRY, Martha Mc Chesney, 1866-1942. Born in Rome, Ga.
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 : Founder and director of the Berry Schools and College.
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 : 1st Berry School opened in 1901; girls school added in
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 : 1910; Junior College, in 1926; four-year College, in

 1930. Recipient of many honorary degrees.

Daughter of well-to-do plantation owner. By compassion for neighbors less fortunate, moved into action against "poverty, ignorance, shiftlessness, poverty --.....a vicious circle." Made work respectable and education a "must" among mountain boys and girls. Poured her own patriotism into her pioneering in vocational education. Raised and spent much more. Property results: 30,000 acres and 100 buildings valued at several million dollars. "Invest in a boy or girl at Berry," was her plea. Wood was chopped, stumps dug, brick made and laid for "the stately halls," and other practical abilities developed. "Boys in the dairy department were thrilled when their stock first won prizes in the county fair. To-day (1944) the Berry Jersey herd is often awarded top rating for all America. In poultry also Berry has broken national records." Her early symbols: "the open Bible, ~~for~~ foundation; the log cabin, for simplicity; the lamp, for desire to learn; the plow, for work and the willingness to work," are engraved on the Berry seal. For the entrance she designed the beautiful "Gate of Opportunity." What she did "served as a pattern for other educators. J. S. Stewart (state commissioner of education) wrote that the (11) agricultural and mechanical schools which were established a few years later incorporated the best features of the experiment made by Martha Berry." "Be a lifter and not a leaner," the school's unofficial slogan, was suggested by an address made by Theodore Roosevelt at the school. His visit "stands out as one of the high lights of the early days....Gifford Pinchot, of conservation fame, was there too. 'I'm glad you are here,' said Roosevelt. 'This is the only thing I know of that beats conservation!' 'This,' Miss Berry reminded them, 'is conservation!' " President Coolidge, fifteen years later, presented Miss Berry the Theodore Roosevelt Medal "for outstanding service to her country." "Because of you," he said, "thousands have been released from the bondage of ignorance and countless other thousands in the generations to come will walk not in darkness but in light." Fuller details in "Pioneer American Educators," by Mildred Sandison Fenner and Eleanor C. Fishburn, ~~Hugh Birch - Horace Mann Fund, N. E. A., Washington 6, D.C., p. 145~~ ¹⁹⁴⁴ and "Hist. Ag. Ed....." U. S. Office of Education, 1944, p. 90. -- R. W. Stimson.

- John T. Wheeler and

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