

Mary Church Terrell

An Original Oberlin Activist

A Traveling Educational Exhibition

Mary Church Terrell's work at the intersection of race and gender in America is inspirational. Her lifelong struggles for equity and inclusion are highly relevant and have applicability for a modern social justice framework. *Mary Church Terrell: An Original Oberlin Activist* explores her life and work through four lenses of achievement: **Learning, Labor, Leadership, and Legacy.**



This exhibit combines 10 biographical panels with 10 facsimiles of materials from the Mary Church Terrell Papers and other collections held by the Oberlin College Archives. The Raymond Langston family, descendants of Terrell, donated the papers to the College Archives.

Five months before her death, Mrs. Terrell shares the spotlight with Thurgood Marshall. Both were accepting awards from the Seagram-Vanguard Society, New York City, 1954.



Photo of a Protest, Washington, D.C., 1952
Mary Church Terrell picketing a Kresge store in Washington, D.C.

Photo credit: The Afro-American



A business card belonging to Russell Thomas Edwards, a forester from Washington, D.C., who knew of Terrell's efforts to break down the barriers around social injustice and discrimination. Edwards seemed to make this knowledge clear to the recipient of the card in the simple written statement, "You Can't Keep Her Out."

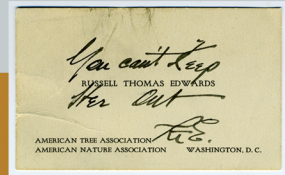


Photo of a Protest, Washington, D.C., 1950

Mary Church Terrell (fourth from left) and members of the Coordinating Committee for the Enforcement of Anti-Discrimination Laws in Washington, D.C.



"A white woman has only one handicap to overcome - that of sex. I have two - both sex and race. I belong to the only group in this country which has two such huge obstacles to surmount." – Mary Church Terrell

About Mary Church Terrell (September 23, 1863 - July 24, 1954)

Mary Church Terrell, born Mary Eliza Church, was a writer, educator, lecturer, and activist.

Terrell was born in Memphis, Tennessee to Robert Reed Church and Mary Louisa Ayers Church, both of whom had been slaves. It is not clear when her parents had attained their freedom, but both were named in the 1870 Decennial Census, ages 25 and 24 respectively, and recorded by the enumerator as mulatto. Her mother, Louisa Ayres Church, owned a successful, multicultural hair salon, while her father, Robert Reed Church, was the first black millionaire in the South due to his business and real estate holdings.

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Mary Church Terrell's work at the intersection of race and gender in America is as inspirational today as it was during her lifetime. Her lifelong struggles for equity and inclusion continue to be highly relevant. In October 2018, in conjunction with the inauguration of Carmen Twillie Ambar as the 15th president of Oberlin College and Conservatory, and the first African American president, the Oberlin College Libraries proudly recognized Mary Church Terrell by naming the main library in her honor. May she be an example to future generations of students - at Oberlin and around the country - seeking to use education in service of advocacy.

SISTER LECTURER
LEARNING
PIONEER FOUNDER
WRITER EDUCATOR
LABOR
ALUMNA FEMINIST
SUFFRAGIST ACTIVIST
LEADERSHIP
VISIONARY ORGANIZER
POET CHAMPION
LEGACY

Discover more about Mary Church Terrell's life and achievements at go.oberlin.edu/oc/terrell. Most material in this exhibit and the digital exhibition comes from the varied collections of the Oberlin College Archives, including the Mary Church Terrell Papers, donated to the College by Raymond and Elizabeth Langston. Visit us online at oberlin.edu/archives

Learn more



Exhibition at a Glance

Contents: 10 freestanding biographical panels (each approximately 2.5' x 6') and 10 facsimiles of documents and photographs (framed or unframed available) from the Mary Church Terrell Papers, housed in the Oberlin College Archives.

Size: A variety of options are available, requiring a minimum of 30 running feet and a maximum of 150 running feet.

Crates: Exhibit ships in up to 3 crates (depending on inclusion of framed or unframed ephemera), each weighing ca. 90 lbs.

Costs: Host institution pays round-trip shipping costs along with the loan fee for an eight-week booking period.

For more information, including a complete illustrated checklist, contact:

Heath Patten, Visual Resources Curator
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Email: hpatten@oberlin.edu

Additional Materials

In addition to the exhibition itself, hosts will receive:

- Curatorial and registration information
- Shipping, handling, and installation instructions
- Public relations support, including a sample press release, sample images, and advice on promoting the exhibition

Documents available for download at: oberlin.edu/library/terrell/terrelltravel



Digital Exhibit



Exhibition Prospectus

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