

# UCC ROOTS

## *Remembering our History*

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February 2016

### **An Abolitionist, Teacher, Journalist, and Attorney**

As a child, Mary Ann Shadd [Carey] had seen the face of fear and witnessed the struggles of escaping runaway slaves. Born in Wilmington, Delaware in 1823, she was the oldest daughter of prominent free African Americans, Harriet and Abraham Shadd. Their home was a secret station on the Underground Railroad.

Educated in a Quaker school in West Chester, Pennsylvania, she became a teacher, and at age 17 opened a school for Blacks. She was also a writer and a journalist. In 1841 she published *Hints to the Colored People of the North*. After the passage of the U.S. Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, she moved to Canada, taught school, and wrote extensively to encourage slaves to flee to Canada.

Mary Ann worked with Frederick Douglass, Union Missionary abolitionists, teachers and clergy to abolish slavery in the U.S. In the 1850s her writings challenged missionaries, clergy leaders and churches to do more. She founded a newspaper, the *Provincial Freeman*, which from 1853 to 1857 became the voice of Canada's Blacks, making her the first female publisher in North America. The American Missionary Association also helped her found an interracial school in Canada. In 1861, she wrote a tribute to John Brown, who led a raid at Harper's Ferry, and soon thereafter she returned to the United States to urge Blacks to join the Union Army to defeat the Confederacy.

After the war and the death of her husband (Thomas F. Carey) and her son (Linton) she moved to Washington, D.C. with her daughter, Sarah. She enrolled in law school, and in 1883 she became the first woman to obtain a law degree from Howard University. She died in 1893.

Mary Ann Shadd Carey raised her voice and used her skills to sow seeds that continue to undergird the Justice and Witness Ministries of the UCC.

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