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# Mary's Story & Song

*Mary Haralson Coleman, Starkishia*

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**Mary's Story & Song** Mary Haralson Coleman, Starkishia
Mary was born in 1933 in Scott, County Mississippi to sharecroppers. Her memoir described her two fathers as the most significant people in her childhood. One of them was impoverished and indebted to white landowners, and the other owned property and was independent. They agreed to expose Mary to both worlds. Change is hard, but Mary found her way, and the inspiration to dream. With the gift of song and the mind to step out of the box, Mary broke ground in business and in song. Meredith Etc Editorial Review EXCERPT: At age six, I, along with my siblings attended a one room school, where … Mr. McCarter taught first through eighth grade. We carried our lunch to school in small molasses buckets which consisted of whatever we had left over from the previous day. We did not eat sandwiches like children do today; we ate peas, greens, salt meat and cornbread. Sometimes we had a baked sweet potato for dessert. Bessie often sat on the porch and dipped snuff. I wanted to try it, and be grown. One day, I asked her for some snuff, and she said, “Okay, let me show you how to put it in your lip, so you won’t get it on your clothes.” “Okay,” I agreed. She filled the lid with snuff and told me, “Lean your head backward.” I obeyed her, and she filled my mouth with snuff and began to rub it in. I tried to get away … and swallowed some of it. I laid out on the porch in the summer heat longing to die. I was so sick I felt death was better than suffering. The incident took my taste for snuff… Advance Praise for Mary’s Story & Song Mrs. Coleman has written a book that everyone should read. We were both born in 1933 and lived in Mississippi during the years of the Black Civil Rights Movement. Her life is a living reality of the Black struggle and a greater true picture of the changes that occurred. I loved it. James Meredith, Ole Miss, 1962 While this book is a personal account of the life of Mary Coleman, it is one with which we can all identify and cherish. I am sure that this historical account of her life will be something that generations coming after her will be able to use to get an understanding of from whence they came. Judge William Walker Mary’s Story and Song chronicles the great strides and struggles in the transformative life of the Haralson Family from slavery to freedom! Mrs. Coleman’s soft-spoken style and positive outlook is evident throughout this book and makes for a spirited autobiography that reads like a novel. It will serve as Mrs. Coleman’s testimony for many generations to come. Norma G. Alexander

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