

Elizabethtown College 125th Anniversary  
National Historic Preservation Trust This Place Matters Campaign & Campus Historic Building Survey  
Based on the National Parks Service Historic American Building Survey  
2024 Summer Creative Arts and Research Program SCARP  
Ava Barton Class of 2027 and Shawn Gipe Class of 2027  
Jean-Paul Benowitz, Director of Prestigious Scholarships and Fellowships and Public Heritage Studies



## B. Mary Royer (1881 - 1951)

Katie Carter & Kaedy Masters previously wrote a biography for Mary B Royer, which no doubt required extensive online research and should be credited in this project:

"On 30 August 1881 Mary Buch Royer, better known as B. Mary Royer, was born.<sup>1</sup> She was raised by her grandmother after her mother, Laura Buch Royer, died when she was seventeen months old.<sup>2</sup> When she was fourteen years old she moved to Richland, Pennsylvania to live with her aunt and uncle.<sup>3</sup> Her devotion to the church began when her Aunt Emma Buch urged her toward service.<sup>4</sup> From her baptism on Christmas 1897 until her death fifty-four years later, Royer remained faithful to God.<sup>5</sup>

Royer wished for the advantages she was not granted in a liberal education and she sought higher education.<sup>6</sup> She began this by taking a



<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission; Pennsylvania, USA; Certificate Number Range: 103051-105600.

<sup>2</sup> *Church of the Brethren, History of the Church of the Brethren: Eastern Pennsylvania*, 1915-1965, (Lancaster, PA: Forry and Hacker, 1965), 340.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Chet Williamson, *Uniting Work and Spirit: A Centennial History of Elizabethtown College* (Elizabethtown, PA, Elizabethtown College Press, 2001), 216, *Church of the Brethren*, 340, Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission.

<sup>6</sup> *Church of the Brethren*, 340.

Elizabethtown College 125th Anniversary  
National Historic Preservation Trust This Place Matters Campaign & Campus Historic Building Survey  
Based on the National Parks Service Historic American Building Survey  
2024 Summer Creative Arts and Research Program SCARP  
Ava Barton Class of 2027 and Shawn Gipe Class of 2027  
Jean-Paul Benowitz, Director of Prestigious Scholarships and Fellowships and Public Heritage Studies

short Bible term at Juniata College, after her time here, she worked at the Brethren Publishing House in Elgin.<sup>7</sup> Several years later, she took another Bible course, this time at Elizabethtown College.<sup>8</sup> After graduation, she continued to New York City to attend the Bible Teachers Training School.<sup>9</sup> She used her education to teach Bible and English courses at Hebron Seminary in Nokesville, Virginia for two years.<sup>10</sup> She then moved on to Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan to take nurse training in preparation for her mission trips to India.<sup>11</sup>

In the fall of 1913, at age thirty-two Royer left for Marathi, India where, due to the emersion in the culture, she was able to learn to fluently speak the native language.<sup>12</sup> Royer taught evangelism to girls and women throughout the villages in the Dahanu area.<sup>13</sup> She lived in a native house among the villagers and formed a bond with the women around her through their close proximity.<sup>14</sup> A few years later, Royer was temporarily asked to assist with Dr. Nickey's medical work at Dahanu Road until a nurse was available.<sup>15</sup>

Following her work with Dr. Nickey, she returned to evangelistic teaching and was transferred to the girls' school in Ahwa and Dahanu.<sup>16</sup> She provided counsel and guidance at these schools and lived with some of her students.<sup>17</sup> Royer was not granted any conveniences by living in the jungle which caused her to have health difficulties.<sup>18</sup> These included several "attacks of malarial fever" and limitations caused by a weakened heart.<sup>19</sup> Despite this, she never complained, rather she thanked her Lord for the opportunities He granted her.<sup>20</sup>

At the end of her time in India, Royer was sixty-six years old, served four terms, and was elected twice to represent the Second District of India on the Standing Committee, although she only served once.<sup>21</sup> During her thirty-three years as a missionary, she was supported by her home church in Richland, which provided her with monetary assistance.<sup>22</sup> Her retirement from missionary work did not stop her from being active in her home congregation.<sup>23</sup> From her home, she taught both Sunday School and Gospel until the day she died.<sup>24</sup> On 6 December 1951, Royer

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 341.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.; Katie Carter et al., "B. Mary Royer," (Landmarks and Legends essay, Elizabethtown College, 2017) 1.

<sup>22</sup> *Church of the Brethren*, 341, Jean-Paul Benowitz, Peter J. DePuydt, *Elizabethtown College* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014), 42.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

Elizabethtown College 125th Anniversary  
National Historic Preservation Trust This Place Matters Campaign & Campus Historic Building Survey  
Based on the National Parks Service Historic American Building Survey  
2024 Summer Creative Arts and Research Program SCARP  
Ava Barton Class of 2027 and Shawn Gipe Class of 2027  
Jean-Paul Benowitz, Director of Prestigious Scholarships and Fellowships and Public Heritage Studies



died, unmarried, peacefully in her home in Richland.<sup>25</sup> There was a large attendance to her funeral service, which was led by Pastor Ray Kurtz.”<sup>26</sup> Attendees included twenty ministers from her district who spoke very highly of her.<sup>27</sup>

B. Mary Royer was Buried in the Richland Cemetary in Richland, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, USA.<sup>28</sup>

### Bibliography

Benowitz, Jean-Paul. *Elizabethtown College: The Campus History Series*. Charleston, S. C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2014.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Elizabethtown: Images of America*. Charleston, S. C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2015.

Bowman, Carl F. *Brethren Society: The Transformation of A Peculiar People*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

Durnbaugh, Donald F. ed., *Brethren Encyclopedia* 4 vols. Philadelphia, PA: The Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc. 1983-2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren, 1708-1995*. Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1997.

Falkenstein, George N. *The Organization and the Early History of Elizabethtown College*. Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown College, 1937.

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> “B Mary Royer,” Find A Grave, accessed July 8, 2024. [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/49408865/b\\_mary-royer](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/49408865/b_mary-royer).

Elizabethtown College 125th Anniversary  
National Historic Preservation Trust This Place Matters Campaign & Campus Historic Building Survey  
Based on the National Parks Service Historic American Building Survey  
2024 Summer Creative Arts and Research Program SCARP  
Ava Barton Class of 2027 and Shawn Gipe Class of 2027  
Jean-Paul Benowitz, Director of Prestigious Scholarships and Fellowships and Public Heritage Studies

*History of the Church of the Brethren of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania: By The Committee Appointed by District Conference.* Lancaster: PA: Press of the New Era Printing Company, 1915.

*History of the Church of the Brethren of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1915-1965.* Lancaster: PA: Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1965.

MacMaster, Richard K. *Elizabethtown: The First Three Centuries.* Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown Historical Society, 1999.

Schlosser, Ralph W. *History of Elizabethtown College: 1899-1970.* Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown College, 1971.

Williamson, Chet. *Uniting Work and Spirit: A Centennial History of Elizabethtown College.* Elizabethtown, PA: Elizabethtown College, 2001.