## Today in History - May 18

Everything

Select date | May 18 Go Plessy v. Ferguson

**May 18** 

V

**Mary McLeod Bethune** 

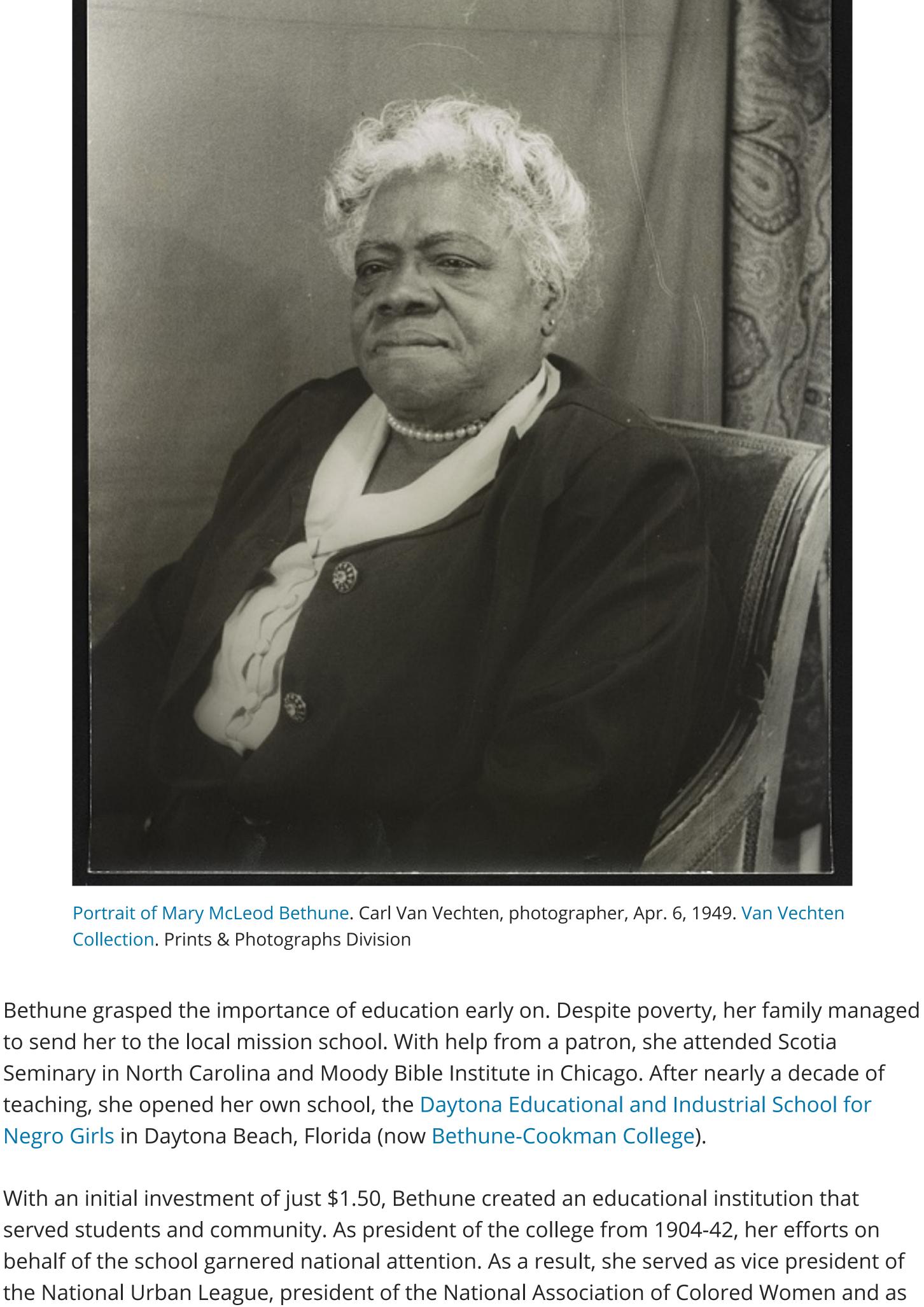
Educator and political leader Mary McLeod Bethune died at the age of eighty on May 18, 1955, in Daytona Beach, Florida. Born in Mayesville, South Carolina, in 1875, Bethune was

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## were leaders of Mayesville's African-American community. We live in a world which respects power above all things. Power, intelligently directed, can

lead to more freedom. "Dr. Bethune's Last Will & Testament." [Originally published in *Ebony* (August 1955)] Bethune-Cookman University.

one of the last of Samuel and Patsy McLeod's seventeen children. Former slaves, her parents



African-American woman. Simultaneously, she served the Roosevelt administration as a special adviser on minority affairs. She was also appointed a special assistant to the secretary of war to oversee the selection of candidates for the Women's Army Corps, one of

many influential positions she held during the 1940s. Bethune spent her final years writing

• The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House in Washington, D.C. is the site of Bethune's

View photographs, detailed drawings, and other information about the Mary McLeod

Negro Women , which she founded in 1935. The National Archives for Black Women's

last residence in the District and the first headquarters of the National Council of

Affairs, National Youth Administration, then the highest government position ever held by an

In 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made Bethune director of the Division of Negro

an advisor on minority issues to presidents Coolidge and Hoover.

and traveling.

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research tools:

Black History Month

Plessy v. Ferguson

History is also housed at this site.

Bethune Council House that are part of the survey included in the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record/Historic American Landscapes Survey collection. • Search African American Perspectives: Materials Selected from the Rare Book Collection on National Association of Colored Women to learn more about this organization. • To learn more about historically black colleges, see the Today in History features on Howard University and Fisk University.

• Search on Bethune, Bethune-Cookman College, and other relevant terms in the pictorial

For more information on African Americans and education browse the following online

collections for photographs including Dr. Bethune, students, and campus life.

Sources for Images on African American History

African American History collections

African American History Online: A Resource Guide

On May 18, 1896, the Supreme Court ruled separate-but-equal facilities constitutional on intrastate railroads. For some fifty years, the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision upheld the principle of racial segregation. Across the country, laws mandated separate accommodations on buses and trains, and in hotels, theaters, and schools.

in a dissenting opinion, Justice John Marshall Harlan argued that segregation in public

facilities smacked of servitude and abridged the principle of equality under the law.

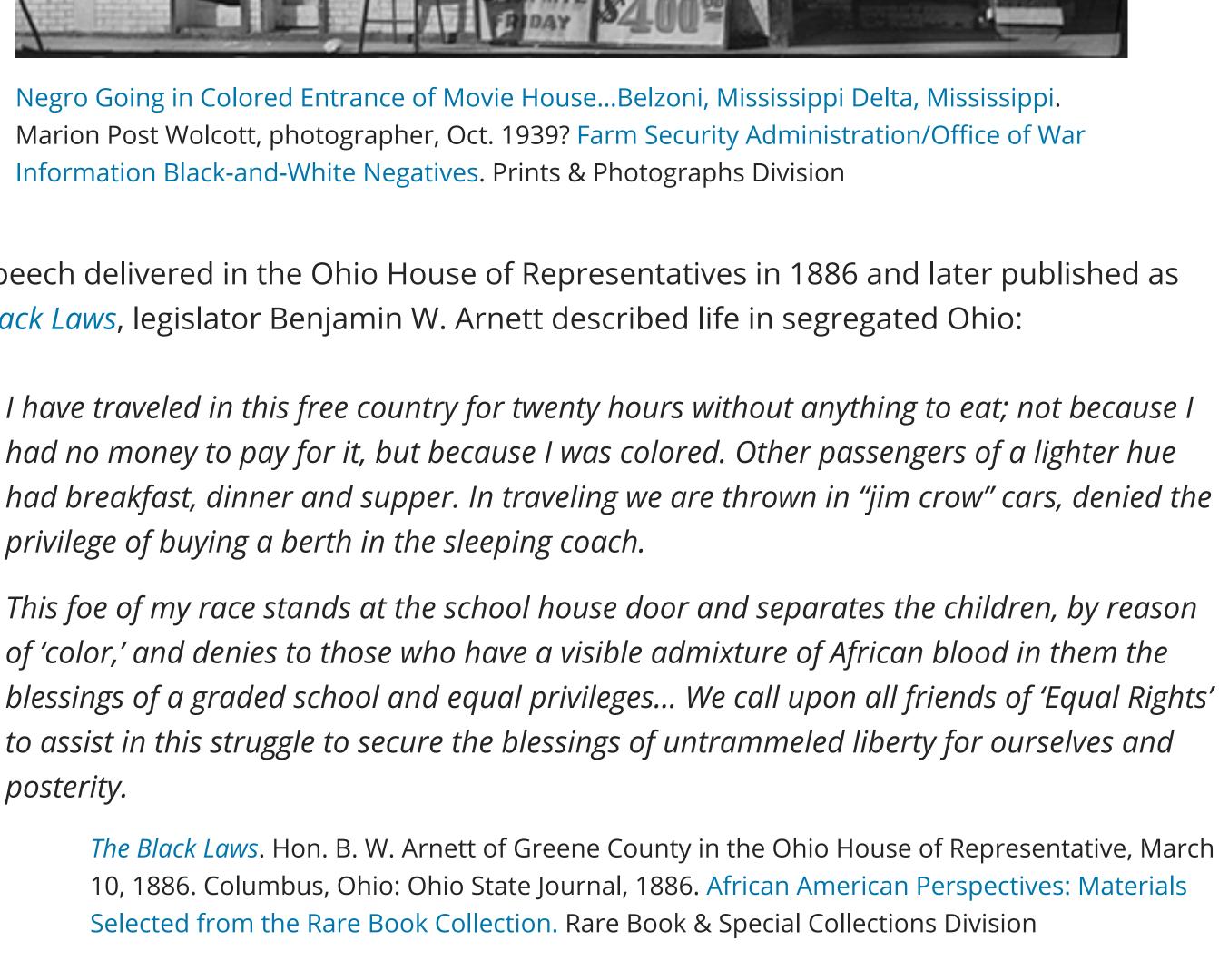
Negro Drinking at "Colored" Water Cooler in Streetcar Terminal, Oklahoma City,

War Information Black-and-White Negatives. Prints & Photographs Division

Oklahoma. Russell Lee, photographer, July 1939. Farm Security Administration/Office of

GOOD FOR LIFE!

The Court's majority opinion denied that legalized segregation connoted inferiority. However,



By the 1930s, the practice of racial segregation was widespread and vigorously maintained.

refugees were cared for in separate relief facilities. A series of Farm Security Administration

After hearing arguments by NAACP lawyer Thurgood Marshall, the Supreme Court overruled

the *Plessy* decision on May 17, 1954. In *Brown v. the Board of Education*, a unanimous Court

adopted Justice Harlan's position that segregation violated the Thirteenth and Fourteenth

When devastating floods hit Arkansas in 1937, for example, white refugees and black

photographs documenting the flood demonstrates the pervasive nature of segregation.

A Greyhound Bus Trip from Louisville, Kentucky to Memphis, Tennessee.... Esther Bubley, photographer, Sept. 1943. Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black-and-White Negatives. Prints & Photographs Division

Search African American Perspectives: Materials Selected from the Rare Book

Collection on segregation to locate primary source material pertaining to segregation.

The African American Timeline: 1850-1925 lists significant dates in African-American

Courts, 1740 to 1860 to read more about the experiences of African and African-

American slaves in the American colonies and the United States. Read, for example,

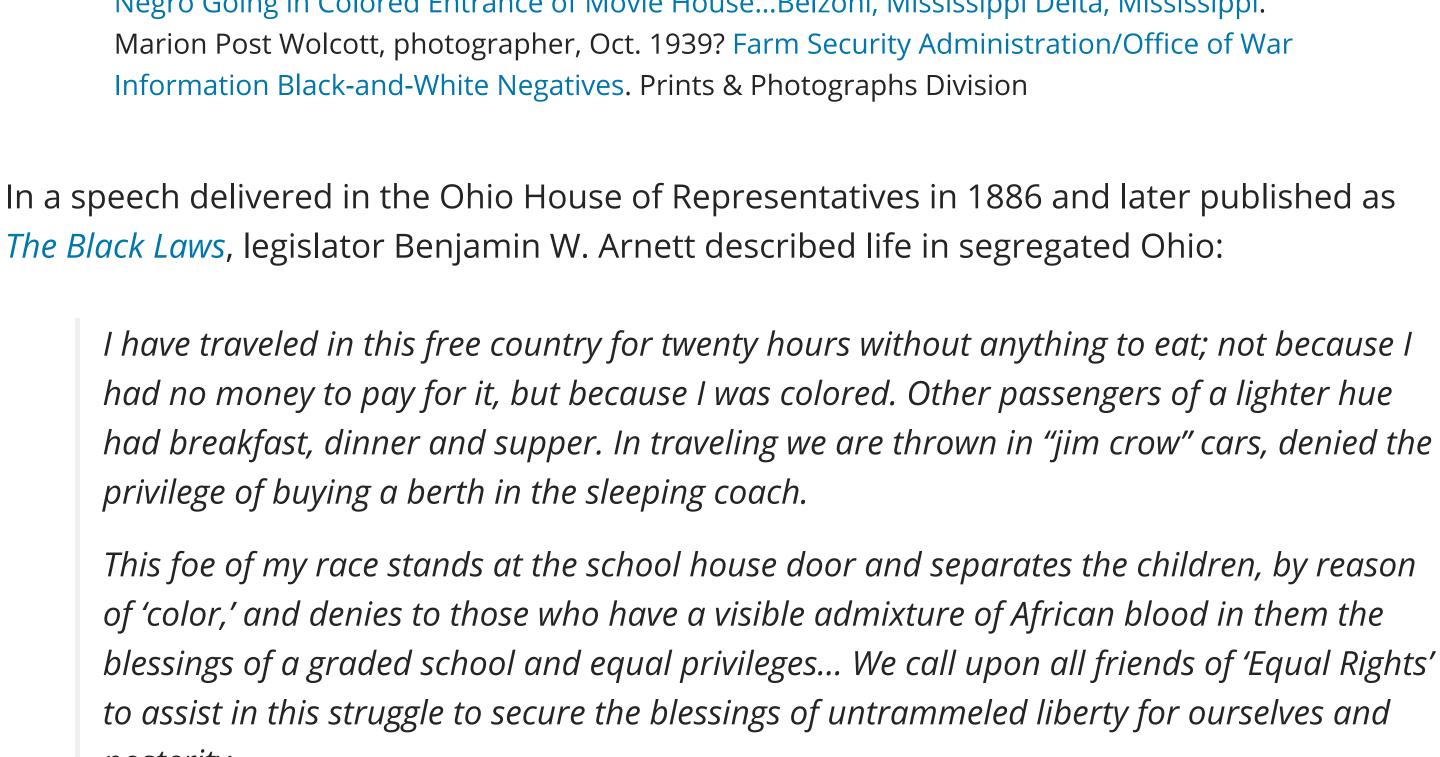
• Search the collection Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black-

and-White Negatives on the terms colored, white, black or negro to find additional

• The African-American Mosaic: A Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of

Amendments to the Constitution.

COLORED - ADM.



## • The Supreme Court Opinions for both the *Plessy* (1896) and *Brown* (1954) cases are available online at FindLaw .

Accessibility

Legal

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history.

Dred Scott vs. John F. A. Sandford.

photographs documenting the era of segregation.

Tour selected Library of Congress online exhibitions:

Black History & Culture

• With an Even Hand: Brown v. Board at Fifty The following online research tools provide additional resources on African Americans and segregation, black laws, and the Jim Crow era.

• The African American Odyssey: A Quest for Full Citizenship

- African American History Online: A Resource Guide African American History collections

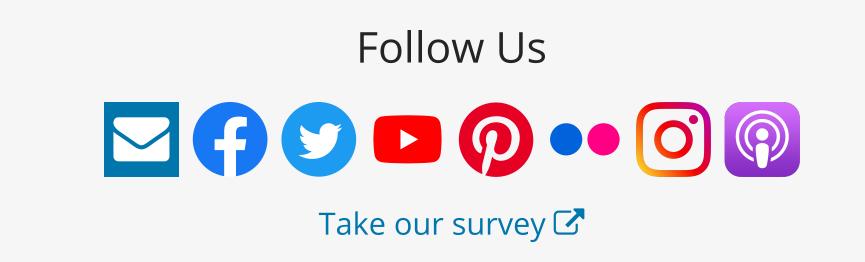
Inspector General

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United States Legislative Information

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Today's Stories: Mary McLeod Bethune

• Search for newspaper articles on racial segregation, *Plessy v. Ferguson* and other related topics in the historic American newspapers database Chronicling America. Start with Plessy v. Ferguson (Jim Crow Laws): Topics in Chronicling America. • Search on keywords such as *fugitive* or names such as *Wendell Phillips* in Slaves and the

- Black History Month Sources for Images on African American History

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