Florence Nightingale

The lady with the lamp

By Florence Osman
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Florence Nightingale – Introduction

Florence Nightingale was a famous Victorian Nurse, known for changing Nursing to this day. Hospitals before Florence were very dirty if you went to the Hospital ill you would come out even more ill then when you came in. But now if you go in modern Hospital ill you would come out fine. This is because she changed the way they were looked after. As well as changing Hospital’s she opened St Thomas’s Hospital located in Hampshire, part of this hospital is still there and is in Victoria Country Park. Florence had to fight hard to become a nurse as women from her back ground did not work. Today Nursing is still practiced and taught in the same ways as Florence did all those years ago.
The life of Florence Nightingale

The founder of modern nursing, and the Lady with the Lamp...

Florence Nightingale was born in the city of Florence in Italy, on 12 May 1820 whilst her parents were enjoying a long honeymoon, that’s how she got her name! Her parents were called William and Fanny Nightingale, and she had one older sister, too – Frances Parthenope.

William Nightingale was a wealthy banker and they had servants and two lovely houses – a winter home in Hampshire and a summer home in Derbyshire.

At the time most girls didn’t go to school, many didn’t receive any education at all! But William was keen for his daughters to learn, and gave them lessons in lots of different subjects, including science, history and maths.

In Victorian Britain, wealthy women like Florence weren’t expected to work – their job was to marry and look after the home. She had servants, guests, reading, sewing and attending social events. But Florence to do something different. When she was 16 years old, she believed she heard a voice from God calling for her to carry out important work to help those suffering. She wanted to be a nurse.

When Florence told her parents, they were not happy! Nursing was not a respectful job and, what’s more, hospitals were filthy, horrible places where sick people died – certainly
no place for wealthy girl like Florence! William tried hard to change his daughter’s mind.

It wasn’t long before Florence put her new skills to the test. By 1853 she was running a women’s hospital in London, where she did a fantastic job with working conditions as well as patient care.

In 1854, the Crimean War broke out – a war with Britain, France and Turkey on one side, and Russia on the other. British soldiers went off to fight in the war. Soon soldiers were dying from battle wounds, cold, hunger and sickness, with no real medical care or nurses to treat them. Help was needed fast, and the Minister for War – called Sidney Herbert – knew just the person... He asked Florence to lead a team of nurses to the Crimea!

When she arrived, she found the Army hospital in a terrible mess. It was overcrowded and filthy, with blocked drains, broken toilets and rats running everywhere. There weren’t enough medical supplies or equipment, and wounded soldiers had to sleep on the dirty floor, without blankets to keep warm, clean water to drink or fresh food to eat. Not surprisingly, disease spread quickly and most of the soldiers died from infection.

Florence knew that the soldiers could only get well again if the hospitals got better. With money from back home, she bought better medical equipment and decent food, and paid for workmen to clear the drains. And together with her team, she cleaned the wards, set up a hospital kitchen and provided the wounded soldiers with quality care – bathing them,
dressing their wounds and feeding them. As a result of all the improvements, far fewer soldiers were dying from disease.

Florence Nightingale truly cared for her suffering patients. At night, when everyone was sleeping, she’d visit the soldiers to make sure they were comfortable. She’d also write letters home for those who could not write themselves. Since Florence carried a lantern with her on her night visits, the soldiers would call her ‘The Lady with the Lamp’.

By the time Florence returned to England in 1856, she’d made quite a name for herself. After newspapers wrote about her work in the Crimea, people thought of her as a hero. Queen Victoria wrote her a letter to say thank you for everything she had done.

But Florence had no care for fame, and even though the war was over, there was still work to be done. She set about writing letters to important people telling them what was wrong with Army hospitals, and in September 1856 she met with Queen Victoria to discuss ways to improve military medical systems. A big improvement happened the Army started to train doctors, hospitals became cleaner and soldiers were provided with better clothing, food and care.

In 1860, the Nightingale Training School for Nurses opened at St Thomas’s Hospital in London. Not only did the school provide excellent nurse training, it made nursing a respectable career for women who wanted to work outside the home.
Florence was ill when she got older because of all her hard work helping sick people. She saved thousands of people. In 1907, Florence became the first woman to receive the Order of Merit, an award given by the queen for super-special work.

Sadly, Florence Nightingale died on 13 of August 1910, but she will forever be recognised as the founder of modern nursing.

By Florence Osman 😊
The Lady with the Lamp

Florence Nightingale
Crimean war

Field Hospital during the Crimean War
Statue of Florence

Florence in a Hospital
Queen Victoria
Research

Wikipedia – Florence Nightingale

www.natgeokids.com The life of Florence Nightingale