

Florence Ackerly (1884 - 1984)



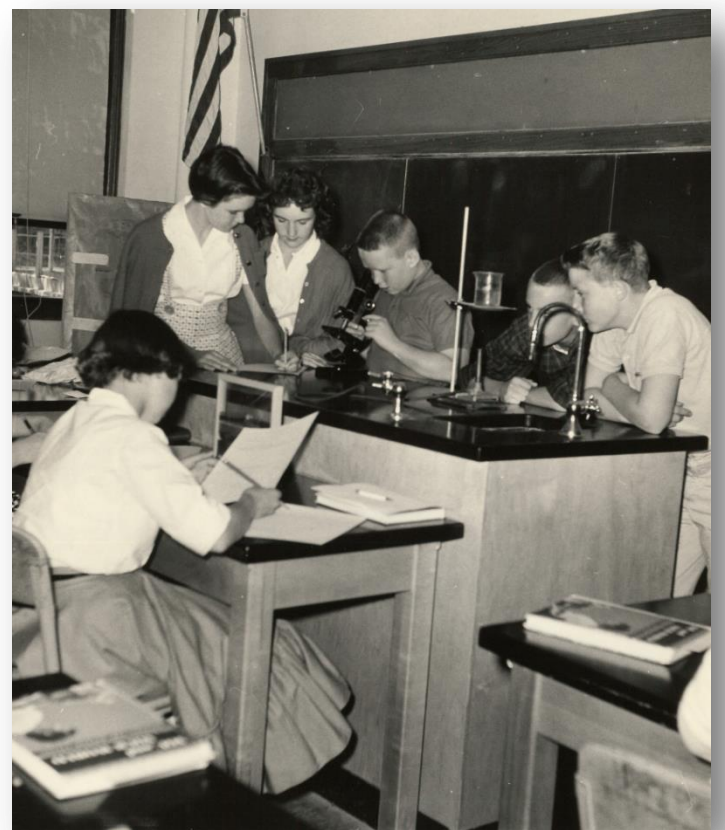
Miss Ackerly
Birmingham Eccentric

Florence May Ackerly was born in 1884 in Joensville, MI near Hillsdale. She attended Michigan State Normal Teacher's College (now Eastern Michigan University).

Florence taught at several schools before ending up at Baldwin High School in 1921 where she taught geography and health. Later she transferred to Barnum Junior High School to teach science. She said of middle schoolers, "I always liked teaching junior high school kids best. When children are that age, they know all the questions. When they get bigger, they know all the answers."

Ackerly further encouraged her students' interest in science by starting the Science Club at Barnum. After school, they went outside and "visited every gravel pit we could find to study insects and rocks. The members weren't interested in flowers."

Even after retirement, Florence enjoyed the outdoors. Her hobbies included bird watching and tending her vegetable garden. She even performed her own scientific experiments. She successfully grafted two different varieties of apples to create a third, getting one tree to produce three different varieties of apples!



Barnum Science Classroom
Birmingham Museum

Why I was inspired: Florence May Ackerly was interested in and dedicated to the subject of science, at a time when few women explored the field.

--Submitted by Brittany Phalen