

# Mary Wooslayer

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Mary Wooslayer was born on January 5, 1887, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She moved to Utah with her family and grew up in Bountiful, Utah (UAD Bulletin, March 1984). Her father, Samuel Wullschleger (or ‘Wooslayer’) passed away, leaving her mother, Anna Maria (Marianne Haller), a poor widow. It is unknown when and where Samuel died and where he was buried (Mary Wooslayer Photograph Collection, 1890).

Mary became Deaf due to diphtheria as a child. She enrolled at the Utah School for the Deaf (USD) in 1898 in Ogden, Utah, and graduated in 1907. As a 7<sup>th</sup> grader, she wrote and published an article entitled “Good Books” in the *Utah Eagle* magazine, the *Utah Eagle* was the new name of the paper at the USD. In the article, she emphasized the importance of reading good books:

If we read good books, we shall certainly obtain many benefits from them. They will assist us to live good, true lives and also give us far higher and nobler ambitions in life.

If we read poor, or bad books, we shall not be helped by them, but harmed, because they do not teach us what is right.

They will help to improve our language if we read them and make our minds brighter and broader. Read! Read! Good books for they will do you much good and will be useful.



Mary Wooslayer  
Photo courtesy of the Utah Digital  
Newspaper, January 10, 1914

We will be capable of doing well in the world from the effects of reading good books. Anyone who never reads good books will be sorry for it later in life.

Abraham Lincoln had never been to school, but he had spent much of time reading good books. This made him a great man (Woolslayer, *The Utah Eagle*, May 15, 1904).

Mary entered the University of Utah in 1910, notably as its first Deaf student, and graduated with a bachelor's degree in physical education in 1916 (Mary Woolslayer's



**Mary Woolslayer, 1907 Utah School for the Deaf Senior  
The Utah Eagle, June 6, 1907**

University of Utah transcript, 1916). Her course load was broader and covered more departments than that of any other student at the university. In domestic science, she earned the distinction of being first in a class of nearly a hundred students (Utah Digital Newspaper, January 10, 1914).

While a student, Mary was under the sponsorship of Maud May Babcock, a member of the Utah School for the Deaf board of trustees and a faculty member at the University of Utah (Mary Woolslayer Photograph Collection, 1890).

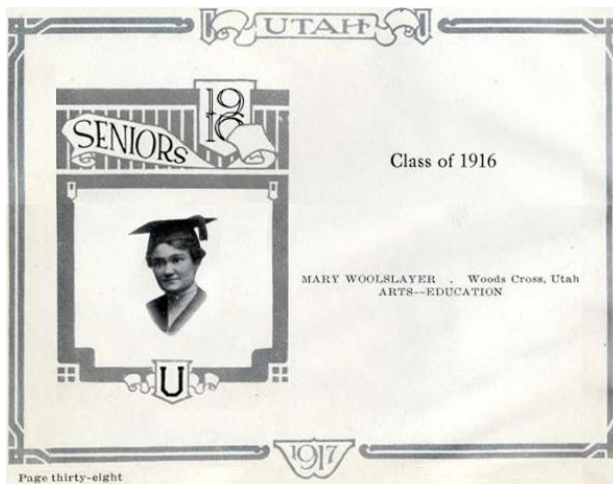
Mary worked her way through college on the slight pay from her employment in laundry services during the summer. During the winter she earned her board and lodging with a private family (Utah Digital Newspaper, January 10, 1914).

At the university, most of Mary's classes were lecture courses (Mary Woolslayer Photograph Collection, 1890). Through her determination, she managed to pass all her courses, earning more credits than many other members of her graduating class (Utah Digital Newspaper, January 10, 1914). Digital Newspapers, January 10, 1914). But Mary could neither speak nor

A year after Mary graduated from the University of Utah, she served as secretary for the Utah Association of the Deaf, in 1915. Later Mary taught school in Texas, Virginia and Kentucky (UAD Bulletin, March 1984). In 1916, she was appointed physical education director for girls at the Texas School for the Deaf (Fay, 1916).

On February 21, 1920, Mary joined the Salt Lake City Division No. 56 of the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf at the banquet held at the Newhouse Hotel on the evening of Washington's Birthday (White, *The Silent Worker*, April 1920; Golden Anniversary: Salt Lake City Division No. 56 National Fraternal Society of the Deaf 1916-1966).

In 1922, Mary was hired as a physical education instructor for girls at the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville, Kentucky (Fosdick, 1856). She taught at the school for 40 years. During her adult years, she traveled extensively and lived a very happy and productive life. She never married (Mary Wooslayer Photograph Collection, 1890).



Mary Wooslayer, University of Utah Class of 1916

Eventually, Mary returned to her home state of Utah, residing at the Heritage Place Retirement Home in Bountiful in her last years. She passed away in Bountiful, Utah, on March 21, 1984 at age 97 (Mary Wooslayer Photograph Collection, 1890; UAD Bulletin, March 1984).

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