

Fort Monroe National Monument



Mary Smith Peake

Brave, Pioneering Educator

Born: 1823

Died: February 22, 1862

Hampton University traces its existence to the American Missionary Association and Mary S. Peake, its first African American teacher. Peake was asked to teach former slaves encamped for protection near Fort Monroe. Earlier in her life, Peake, a free woman, defied Virginia law to teach enslaved people to read and write.

To learn more, visit: www.nps.gov/fomr

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