



Diamond Teeth Mary McClain (born **Mary Smith**, August 27, 1902 – April 4, 2000) a lady with a career that extended from the 1910s to the 1990s.

She was known as "**Walking Mary**" until the 1940s. She worked with her half sister Bessie Smith and was present at her death in 1937.

In the 1940s, she had diamonds removed from a bracelet and set into her front teeth, creating a dazzling effect and giving her a new stage name, *Diamond Teeth Mary*. The diamonds were eventually removed to help pay her mother's medical bills. Mary was often promoted as the *Queen of the Blues*, she played with touring shows, and in 1954 was reported as being the lead blues singer with the Rabbit's Foot Minstrels. Among the stories she told about her long career were that she had lived for a time with Satchel Paige and that the young *Elvis Presley* would bring Howlin' Wolf and me liquor from the liquor cabinet.

In 1960 she settled in Bradenton, Florida, and in 1964 and married her second husband, Clifford McClain. She began singing gospel music rather than secular blues, giving up her nightclub engagements but becoming a star at local church events.

Mary died in 2000, at the age of 97. Her ashes were scattered on the railroad tracks in West Virginia where she allegedly first hopped a train. There is a plaque in Huntington, West Virginia, marking the spot.

A play about her life premiered at the Florida Folk Festival in 2000. Her gowns were later put on display in the Florida State Museum and the Blues Hall of Fame Museum in Memphis.