

# Bonnet, Lois Teicher



## KEY IDEAS

- Women have made many contributions to Michigan history, fighting for rights and freedoms along the way
- Simple objects, such as hats, are often symbols of greater themes in art

## STORY

In his history of the State, Michigan native and Pulitzer Prize winner, Bruce Catton recalls the life of pioneer Mary Nevitt Morgan, who, with her husband, Zachariah, helped found Boyne City. Mary was the daughter of fugitive slaves who fled to Canada and then to Haiti in 1860. There she met Zachariah Morgan, who, though born to liberated slaves, followed the same route to the island for fear of abduction. Mary and Zachariah married and had two sons before returning to the United States, this time to Northern Michigan. In the early years, Mary and her two sons farmed while Zachariah got a job in Charlevoix to bring in extra money. When the railroad went through to Little Traverse Bay, they invested their savings in land that was being platted near the mouth of the Boyne River. There they organized the first school district and became charter members of the first church.

Mary was the guest of honor at the diamond jubilee of that first church in 1949. When she died two years later, at 107, all the businesses in Boyne City were closed to honor the woman who “had given help and friendship to people...strength and character of her own to the community.”

## BACKGROUND

*Bonnet* with its flowing ribbons represents women's contributions throughout time, particularly during the pioneer days when the very sustenance of life had to be created every day. Women have worn many hats throughout Michigan's history: Native American women, settler's wives, cooks in logging camps, teachers, lighthouse keepers, fur traders, farmers, factory workers, military personnel, senators and a governor all have stories to tell.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What forms do you see when looking at this sculpture?
- What other objects, other than a bonnet, are composed of similar forms and shapes?