

## Motorcycle Queen

Imagine riding across the country on a motorcycle. That's what Bessie Stringfield did in the 1930s. What an adventure!

Bessie got her first motorcycle in 1928. She was only 16 years old. No one in her family knew how to ride, so she taught herself.

Bessie rode through all 48 states. She went back and forth across the country eight times. She even went to Europe, Brazil, and Haiti. Bessie made money by doing motorcycle tricks at carnivals.

Riding her motorcycle was a fun adventure. But it was also hard. Some people did not think that Black women should be riding motorcycles. In some states, she wasn't allowed to rent a motel room. She had to sleep in gas stations.

Bessie joined the army during World War II. She carried important messages to army bases on her motorcycle. She was the only woman in her unit.

After the war, Bessie lived in Florida. She worked as a nurse. But she still rode her motorcycle. She owned 27 Harley Davidson motorcycles during her life.



Bessie's neighbors called her the Motorcycle Queen of Miami. She led a parade of motorcycle riders around Florida. She also started the Iron Horse Motorcycle Club.

People who ride motorcycles admire Bessie. They elected her to the Motorcycle Hall of Fame. Each year a group of women ride across the country just like she did. They ride in her memory to celebrate her spirit of adventure.



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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did Bessie learn to ride a motorcycle?
  - a. From her family
  - b. In the army
  - c. By herself
  - d. At the Iron Horse Motorcycle Club
2. What did Bessie do during World War II?
  - a. She was a nurse
  - b. She delivered messages
  - c. She performed at carnivals
  - d. She led a parade
3. Why did Bessie have to sleep in gas stations?
  - a. Because some people did not think Black women should be riding motorcycles
  - b. Because she didn't have enough money for a motel room
  - c. Because she was the only woman in her unit
  - d. Because her motorcycle needed gas
4. Which of the following statements supports the idea that people who ride motorcycles admire Bessie?
  - a. They elected her to the Hall of Fame
  - b. They ride across the country in her memory
  - c. They didn't let her stay in a motel
  - d. A and B

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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