Marian Anderson

By Lillian Elnatour

Marian Anderson was born on February 27, 1897. Anderson’s family was devoutly Christian and attended a Union Baptist Church. When she turned six, she joined the Church choir and was soon performing solos at her church, and other ones. In addition, her voice had given her the nickname “The Baby Contralto.”

Her aunt persuaded her to appear at local functions. She was paid twenty-five to fifty cents to sing a few songs. Later, her pay rose to five dollars, that was quite a bit of money for a teenager.

It may seem Marian had an okay childhood, but it was also difficult. Her dad had an accident at work and died when he was thirty-four years old. After the tragic event, her family moved in with her grandparents; a year later her grandfather passed away. Those tragic events did not stop Marian from following her dreams.

In 1928, she performed at Carnegie Hall for the first time. And she also won a chance to sing at the Lewisohn Stadium after winning a contest organized by New York Philharmonic Society. On April 9, 1939 seventy-five thousand people had watched Anderson perform on the podium in front of the Lincoln Memorial.

Marian Anderson is known for being the first African American to perform with the New York Metropolitan Opera in 1955. Marian had studied with Boghetti for over two years. She eventually embarked on a tour through Europe, through her Julius Rosenwald scholarship. In 1961 Marian Anderson performed the national anthem at John. F. Kennedy’s inauguration.

After retiring in 1966, Marian set up a farm in Connecticut. Then she moved to Portland, Oregon where she moved in with her cousin for her final years. Marian Anderson had died on April 8, 1993 of natural causes.
“Marian Anderson.” *Biography.com*, A&E Networks Television, 23 Jan. 2019,