

**Historic Germantown  
upcoming exhibit “Inspiring  
*Bright April*: Race and Class  
in 1940’s Germantown”**

celebrates the 1946 children’s  
book *Bright April* by Marguerite  
de Angeli and one of its prime  
African American  
community member

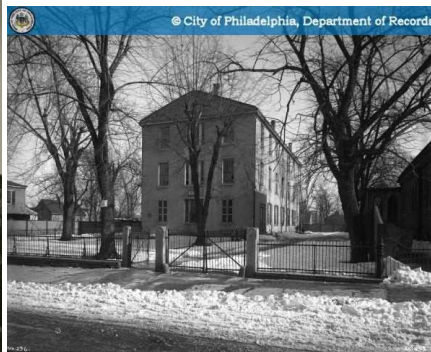


**Marguerite de Angeli**



background sources: West Rittenhouse Street’s Joseph E. Hill School  
Principal (1935-45) Nellie Rathbone Bright.

See *They Carried Us: The Social Impact of Philadelphia’s Black Women Leaders* 2020, & *Breaching Jericho’s Walls* 2011 by Hill/Central HS grad Allen B. Ballard



**Nellie R. Bright, B.A.    Joseph E. Hill School    LOC Carla Hayden, PhD**

Two years of discussion and research have unveiled and brought attention to an entire era of Germantown/Philly Black history. **Historic Germantown, Freedom’s Backyard** (formerly known as Germantown Historical Society) is devoting major portions of its building on Market Square to share the book’s story itself—of a young Brownie Scout, **April Bright**, curious, energetic, friendly and open to new learning, who experiences as early as the first scene the ever present racism that clouded both everyday encounters as well as long term dreams, along with the power of the collaboration between a white author and an African American educator/racial justice warrior. De Angeli, through research, both traditional library and one-on-one interviews, captured and conveyed through fiction the real life and triumphs of Nellie Rathbone Bright.

**Bright April** was one of the first books for children to examine racial prejudice in the United States, and a copy by her neighborhood librarian, inspired the young African American reader, now Librarian of Congress, **Carla Hayden** with its portrayal, virtually non-existent in popular literature of the time, of an everyday Black family just like hers.