

MARTHA ANN FORSAITH



Born: Sep. 9, 1836 in Auburn, Rockingham Co., NH

Died: Dec. 22, 1923 in Scotch Plains, Union Co., NJ

Appointment(s):

American Missionary Association (AMA)

Hilton Head, SC

1863

Parris Island, SC

Mar. 1864

1836-1923

Martha Ann was born September 9, 1836 in Auburn, Rockingham County, New Hampshire to Rufus Forsaith (1800-1858) and Almira McDuffee (1805-1839). In the 1850 US Census, she was living with her maternal grandparents, Archie McDuffee, age 73 and his wife, Sarah, age 65.¹ She was educated in public schools of Derry, Manchester, New Hampshire and then at Colby Academy in New London.² Martha Ann was a single schoolteacher living in the Joseph P. Hanford boarding house in New London, Merrimack, New Hampshire in 1860. She was appointed by the American Missionary Association in 1863 as a teacher to the freedmen in South Carolina.³ She taught first on Hilton Head Island for several months for \$12/month plus food rations.⁴ Martha was transferred to Parris Island by March 1864 to replace Theresa Barcalow who Rev. Richardson had sent to Parris Island along with Mary Armstrong on March 26, 1864.⁵ Miss Barcalow was sent to Jacksonville, Florida. Shortly after

¹ Ancestry.com U.S.Census 1850.

² Chase, John Carroll. History of Chester, New Hampshire including Auburn. Derry, NH, 1926, p 151. <https://ia800900.us.archive.org/16/items/historyofchester00ches/historyofchester00ches.pdf>.

³ Smith, Janel Janiczek, From A Northern Home to a Southern School: Cultural Imperialists or Just Stubborn Yankees, p 179. Statesboro, GA: Georgia Southern University, Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies electronic theses and dissertations 2013, <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/58>, accessed Sept 2, 2018

⁴ Chase, p 151.

⁵ DePratter, Chester B, James B Legg & Stanley South. "Gone But Not Forgotten – African American Cemeteries on the United States Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, SC" University of South Carolina: SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2016, p 25. http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/archanth_books.

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her arrival on Parris Island, Martha wrote to Sec. Michael E. Strieby that Parris Island was not as pleasant a place to live as Hilton Head and many sacrifices had to be made because it was so very isolated.⁶ Miss Forsaith remained on Parris Island less than one year⁷ By June 1864, Martha had 22 pupils (18 boys and 4 girls age 6-16) in the school on Fuller Plantation who were all able to read and write.⁸ In a letter she wrote on July 5, 1864 to Rev. M.E. Strieby, Martha described her students as 'shaven' and 'shorn' and it was evident that the parents were making an effort to send their children 'clean and neat' to school. Martha's April 1865 Teacher's Monthly Report [TMR] included a bill for her services @\$10 per month until the last 6 months for which she received \$15 per month.⁹ AMA schools likely closed on Parris Island after that as no further reports or correspondence from teachers exists.

When she returned home, she married Frederick D. Currie (1839-1891) in late 1865 and had 2 daughters. In 1870, Martha Ann, her husband and daughters were living in Jacksonville, Florida but were back in New Jersey in the 1880 US Census. In 1880, Martha Ann was operating a variety store with her two daughters in Rahway, New Jersey, but her husband was not with them.¹⁰ He shows up in the 1880 census in a hospital in Newark, NJ, suffering from consumption [TB]. Martha Ann died in Scotch Plains, Union County, New Jersey on December 22, 1923 at the home of her daughter Lily Spencer, whose family she had been staying with since before 1920.¹¹ She was buried in the Hillside Cemetery in Scotch Plains, New Jersey.¹²

⁶ Forsaith, Martha A. American Missionary Association Archives. New Orleans, LA: Tulane University: Amistad Research Center, Item #H5546 [Letter from Parris Island to Michael Strieby Mar 14, 1865].

⁷ Smith, p 179.

⁸ Forsaith, Mary Ann. Item # H5373: [Letter July 5, 1864 to Rev M.E. Strieby from Paris Island, SC].

⁹ Forsaith, Mary Ann. Item #5577: TMR & Letter April 22, 1865].

¹⁰ Ancestry.com U.S. Census 1880 Rahway, New Jersey.

¹¹ Chase, John Carroll. History of Chester, NH, incl Auburn: a supplement to the History of Old Chester. Haverhill, Massachusetts: Record Pub Co, 1896.

¹² Findagrave.com Memorial ID #1150545 created 7 Aug 2013 by Dianne Delitto.
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/1150545>.