

MRS. SOPHIA P. GERRISH (nee LORD)



Born: Nov. 6, 1820 in Lebanon, York Co., ME

Died: Dec. 23, 1878 in Lebanon, York Co., ME

Appointment(s):

American Missionary Association
(AMA)

Sea Island Plantation – Hilton Head, SC
1866

Mitchelville – Hilton Head, SC
1866-1869

1820-1878

Sophia was born November 6, 1820 in Lebanon, York Co., Maine to Simeon P. Lord born 1813 and Anna F. born 1817. She married Hiram Gerrish (Dec. 18, 1815 - Dec. 3, 1847). In the 1860 and the 1870 US Census, she was living in Chelsea, Suffolk Co., Massachusetts as a widow with her daughter, Helen. In 1866, Sophia was assigned by the American Missionary Association as a teacher to the freedmen on Hilton Head Island at Sea Island Plantation.¹ In 1866, Mrs. Gerrish was reassigned to Mitchelville and was the last teacher to leave the settlement when the programs supporting northern teachers to the freedmen were closed down.²

¹ 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

- American Missionary Association, The American Missionary Association: Its Missionaries, Teachers, and History. New York: AMA, 1869, p 166.

<https://archive.org/details/americanmissiona00amer>.

² *American Missionary*, Vol XIII, No 5, May 1869, p 101.
<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012370656/cite>

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By May 1869, Mrs. Gerrish was still teaching with the AMA on Hilton Head Island as shown in her Teacher's Monthly Report for May from Mitchelville.³ Sophia freely admitted to holding stereotypes of Negro people before she arrived in the Sea Islands in a letter she wrote from Mitchelville dated March 13, 1869 saying, "...it was some time before I could learn their names, their faces were looking so alike – which caused me considerable trouble."⁴

Sophia P. L. Gerrish died December 23, 1878 in Lebanon, York Co., Maine and was buried in the Lord-Fall-Glenwallie Cemetery in Center Lebanon, York Co., Maine (FAG.com) with her husband and daughter Helen.⁵

³ *Ibid.*

-Gerrish, Sophia P Lord. American Missionary Association Archives.
New Orleans, LA: Tulane University, Amistad Research Center
"Teacher's Monthly Report" [TMR]. Mitchelville, May 1869.

⁴ -Gerrish. Item H7345 [Letter 13 March 1869 to Mr Smith from Mitchelville, HH].
-Smith, p 291.

⁵ Findagrave.com Sophia P Lord Gerrish. Memorial #146948296
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