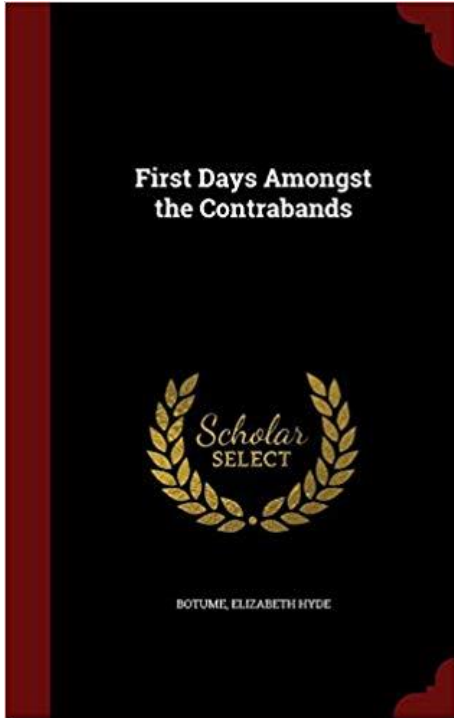


ELIZABETH HYDE BOTUME

(honorary Hilton Head teacher)



Born: Nov. 18, 1823 in Unadilla, Oswego, NY

Died: Nov. 11, 1904 in Newton, Middlesex, MA

Appointment(s):

New England Freedmen's Aid Society (NEFAS)

Old Fort Plantation - Beaufort, SC

Oct. 25, 1864

Edisto Island, SC

Mar. 9, 1865

1823-1904

Elizabeth was born November 18, 1823 in Unadilla, Oswego Co., New York to John Botume (1792-1877) and Sophia Hough (1794-1862)¹. She had one sister, Frances "Fanny" and one brother, John. Elizabeth was living as a single woman in Boston, Massachusetts in the 1850/1860 US Census. In her book, First Days Amongst the Contrabands, Elizabeth shared her excitement in receiving the news that she had been accepted as a teacher by the New England Freedmen's Aid Society²: "On October 25, 1864, I received the following communication, "You are hereby appointed

¹ Hyde Genealogy, or, The Descendants, in the Female as well as in the Male Lines, From William Hyde. accessed 26 Oct 2018 at

https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/61157/46155_b290528-00382.

² Botume, Elizabeth Hyde. First Days Amongst the Contrabands. Boston: Lee and Shepard Pub, 1892.

"National Freedmen's Association Locations of Schools, Personnel and Teachers Spring and Fall 1863". <https://www.drbronsontours.com>

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by the New England Freedmen's Aid Society as a teacher of freed people at Beaufort, SC."

Elizabeth reported to the Quartermaster's Office in New York City on October 28, 1864 and boarded the *Arago* the next day, accompanied by Gen. Rufus Saxton, his wife and baby headed for Hilton Head³. Once they arrived, the teachers all took the Oath of Allegiance to defend the Constitution and Government of the US against all enemies, both foreign and domestic. Elizabeth then boarded a small boat for Beaufort. Elizabeth was one of the first group of teachers known as "Gideon's Band" who arrived in South Carolina to teach the freedmen and she was financially secured by the Whitney family, the only teacher who was not supported by a religious, philanthropic or government agency. She was assigned to Old Fort Plantation as a teacher⁴. She was known to be very practical and even coordinated the building of her own cabin and a schoolhouse. She laughed at newcomer missionaries who believed that freedmen were so childlike that they would never lie or steal. "If slavery produced only saints and no sinners, then in Heaven's name let us leave them in their old state." In writing her memories of her time teaching the 'contrabands', Elizabeth later recalled how she had punished a boy by placing him in the corner of the room with his face to the wall. "When his mother heard of it, she was highly offended because 'I hurt the feelings of her boy, I could lick him for licks is a good ting for a chile ' but she didn't want his feelings hurt."⁵ Elizabeth went to visit the Mitchelville settlement in 1865 and noted that it was 'overflowing' with people packed as closely as possible in churches, storehouses, the jail and arsenals."⁶

On March 9, 1865, Superintendent of Schools related to the Headquarters office that Miss Elizabeth Botume was prepared and willing to leave for Edisto Island where there was a great need for teachers⁷. She would depart as soon as the order was

³ Freedmen's Aid Society. *The Freedmen's Record*, Vol 1, No 1, 'Teacher's List'. Boston: Jan 1865, p 3.

- Smith, Janel Janiczek. From A Northern Home to a Southern School: Cultural Imperialists or Just Stubborn Yankees. Georgia Southern University, Jack N Averitt College of Graduate Studies. Electronic Theses and Dissertations #56, Spring 2010, pp 176-177. <https://digitalcommons/georgiasouthern.edu/etd/58>.

⁴ Spruill, Marjorie Julian; Valinda W Littlefield and Joan Marie Johnson. *South Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times*, Vol 2. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2030. "Martha Fell Schofield and Elizabeth Evelyn Wright: Women Founders of South Carolina African American Schools" by Larry D. Watson, pp 31-49; 86.

⁵ Botume, Elizabeth Hyde. First Days Among the Contrabands. Boston: Lee and Shepard Publisher, 1893. Digitized by W.Vm WeleyonCollege Library, Rare Book Collection, p388.

⁶: Dougherty, Kevin and Robert Pauly, Jr. American Nation Building: Case Studies from Reconstruction to Afghanistan. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Co, Oct 2017, p 136 n 36.

⁷ Freedmen's Aid Society. *The Freedmen's Record*, Vol 1, No 3. Boston: March 1865, pp 31-32; also Vol I, Nos 4 (May 1865); 8 (Aug 1865) and 12 (Dec 1865)

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received. She then taught in the Freedmen's Bureau school where she defended teaching in an industrial school to those from some American Missionary Association schools which continued to teach a classic academic curriculum only. However, she never focused on that goal over the importance of learning to read and write. Many of her students became teachers.

We were convinced that plenty to eat would harmonize and Christianize them faster than hymns and sermons; and that needles and thread and soap and decent clothing were the best educators and would civilize sooner than book knowledge.⁸

Elizabeth died on November 11, 1904 in Newton, Middlesex Co., Massachusetts and was buried on November 13th in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Plot 3880 on Cowslip Path in Cambridge, Middlesex Co., Massachusetts⁹.

⁸ Botume, Elizabeth Hyde. First Days Among the Contrabands. Boston: Lee and Shepard Publisher, 1893. Digitized by W.Vm WeleyonCollege Library, Rare Book Collection.
<https://archive.org/stream/firstdaysamongst00botu+divu.txt5>.

⁹ Findagrave.com Memorial # 181428500 created July 17, 2017 by Jacki Earp of Weymouth, Mass. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/9784206>.